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Drawn by W. Westall, A.R.A.

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Sir Thomas More;

OR,

COLLOQUIES

ON

THE PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS

OF

SOCIETY.

BY

ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq. LL.D.

POET LAUREATE,

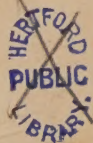
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AND LITERARY SOCIETY, OF THE METROPOLITAN
INSTITUTION, OF THE PHILOMATHIC
INSTITUTION, &c.

RESPICE, ASPICE, PROSPICE.—*St. Bernard.*

WITH PLATES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXIX.

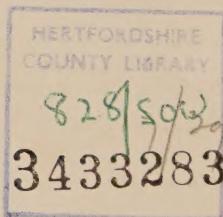
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Ἡ ζητῶ ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν;—GALATIANS, I. 10.

Ὡστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;—GALATIANS, IV. 16.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY C. ROWORTH, BELL YARD,
TEMPLE BAR.

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.



COLLOQUY X.

CROSTHWAITE CHURCH.—ST. KENTIGERN . . . Page 1

PART II.

THE REFORMATION.—DISSENTERS.—METHODISTS . . . 3

COLLOQUY XI.

INFIDELITY.—CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT 89

COLLOQUY XII.

BLENCATHRA.—THRELKELD TARN.—THE CLIFFORDS . 147

PART II.

PRIVILEGED ORDERS.—THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS . 171

COLLOQUY XIII.

THE RIVER GRETA.—TRADE.—POPULATION.—COLONIES. 240

COLLOQUY XIV.

THE LIBRARY 335

COLLOQUY XV.

THE CONCLUSION 407

APPENDIX 429

DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE PLATES.

VOL. I.

Portrait of Sir Thomas More.....	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
Druidical Stones near Keswick	<i>to face page</i> 41
Derwentwater, Bassanthwaite-water, and Skiddaw, from Walla Crag..	122
Derwentwater from Strandshagg	238

VOL. II.

Crosthwaite Church and Skiddaw	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
Thralkeld Tarn	153
Greta Hall, Derwentwater, and Newlands	343

ON THE
PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS
OF
SOCIETY.



COLLOQUY X.

CROSTHWAITE CHURCH.—ST. KENTIGERN.

THOUGH the vale of Keswick owes little of its beauty to any work of man, the position of its Church is singularly fortunate. It stands alone,* about half a mile from the town, and somewhat farther from the foot of Skiddaw; and though not to be compared with the beautiful village churches of Lincolnshire and the West of Eng-

* Some of the oldest and finest yew trees in the country stood formerly in this churchyard. The vicar cut them down, thinking the wood might serve to make a pew for the singers, ..for which purpose it was found unserviceable, when too late. One of them grew beside the school-house, and was so large, that an old man, more than fifty years ago, told my excellent friend, whose name I now write with regret as *the late* Sir George Beaumont, he had seen all the boys, some forty in number, perched at one time upon its boughs.

land, there are few in these northern counties which equal it, and none perhaps in any part of the kingdom which forms a finer object from the surrounding country.

Scarcely a quarter of a mile distant there stood, some few years ago, a little grove of firs, the loss of which is one of the many injuries that the vale has suffered since I became one of its inhabitants. They stood by the road side just at an elbow of the river Greta, covering a mean and deserted building, which had formerly been a Quakers' Meeting House, and is now converted to the better purpose of a National School for girls. It is seldom that any common plantation adds a grace to the country, though to the ease with which it may deform it, some of these mountains bear lamentable witness ; but these fir trees, planted as they were merely because the nook of ground whereon they stood between the road and the river was not worth cultivating, could not have been more happily placed by the most judicious hand. From whatever side you looked over the landscape they were conspicuous ; in summer by their darker hue, in winter by their only verdure. Standing about midway between the town and the church, they were a spot on which the eye rested, and many a sketch book

will have preserved them as one of the features of the vale.

An injury of the same kind was committed some few years earlier, at the upper end of Derwentwater, near Lodore. There was a birch grove there which covered a small piece of flat worthless ground, and which had manifestly been planted by some one of gentle spirit, who feeling how greatly such a grove in that place would embellish one of the loveliest scenes in England, prepared for those who should come after him a pleasure which he could partake only in anticipation. No stranger who had any real perception of those beauties which so many strangers come here to behold, ever noticed that grove without an expression of delight. The trees were in their full growth, .. perhaps of four-score years standing; the bark rent and rugged as that of the cork tree, at the lower part of their trunks, and silvery all above. They reached to the water's edge, in a little level bay which is overspread with water-lilies and reeds. From the lake you saw their light and graceful heads between you and the crags: on the shore they formed a grateful and refreshing shade in a sultry day, which I have frequently enjoyed, for the road lay through them. In the whole circuit of Derwentwater there was

not a more beautiful spot than that bay while the grove was standing; and I believe no one who remembers what it was ever passes it now, without breathing something like a malediction upon those by whose orders it was felled. This was more vexatious than the destruction of the fir grove, because the pecuniary value of the trees could have been of no consequence to the absent proprietor, and if he had known their value as they stood, it may be believed, no consideration would have induced him to sacrifice them.

The Church was built in an age when durability was regarded as an important consideration in such structures. It is a large, unornamented, substantial edifice, with buttresses, battlements, and a square tower; and having stood for centuries, by God's blessing it may stand for centuries to come. On a nearer view, you perceive that it has suffered something by the substitution of slates for lead upon the roof, an alteration which was made some few years ago, when the building underwent a repair. Alice de Romley, heiress of Egremont and Skipton, who, in the reign of Stephen, or of his successor, married the Lord of Allerdale, gave it to Fountains Abbey, and is supposed to have been the person by whom it was founded and

endowed. It was soon afterwards appropriated to that monastery, the collation being reserved to the Bishops of Carlisle. William Fitz Duncan, the husband of this Alice, was son to the Earl of Murray, and brother to David King of Scotland; and this may perhaps explain why the church was dedicated to the Scotch St. Kentigern, Bishop of Glasgow, and patron saint of that cathedral, a personage now utterly forgotten here, in the parish where, during so many generations, his festival used to be celebrated on the 13th of January. Here followeth his legend, .. it is a better word than history for such tales. Hagiologists have related it without scruple, and during many ages it was believed without hesitation.

The Saint in question was, as the romance says of Merlin, son of the Devil, a gentleman on his mother's side : his mother Thametes, or Thenis, being the daughter of King Lot of Lowthean and Orkenay, (a personage well known in the annals of the Round Table,) by Anna, daughter to Uther Pendragon, and half sister to King Arthur. A more illustrious stock could hardly be found in chivalrous genealogy. The time of his birth has been fixed in the year 514, and his nativity, "admirable for the strangeness of it," says Father Cressy, has been

celebrated by many ancient writers. King Lot it seems was at that time a Pagan, and his Queen little better, for their daughter grew up in idolatry; she had opportunity, however, of hearing frequent sermons, and, becoming a convert, observed the precepts of Christianity as diligently as if she had been baptized.

The young Princess was a person of singular beauty, and more singular devotion. Of all that she heard from her religious teacher, there was nothing which so strongly impressed her imagination as the maternity of the Blessed Virgin; insomuch that, (in the words* of the legend,) with a presumptuous boldness and a womanish temerity, she desired and longed to resemble her in this, and even made it the object of her prayers. After awhile she found unequivocal symptoms that her desire had been accomplished. How, or when, or by whom

* “*Maræ Virginis integritatem fœcundam venerando admirans et diligens, præsumptuosâ audaciâ et quadam temeritate feminiâ, in conceptu et partu illi assimilari, et eam imitari desiderans, assiduâ precibus Regem cælorum et Dominum super hoc deprecari sæpius cæpit. Elapso demum temporis spatio inventa est illa in utero habens; et magnificans Deum, desiderium suum adimpletum esse simpliciter credebat. Quod enim in eâ natum est, de complexu humano suscepit, sed ipsa multoties asseruit, et juramento constrinxit, quod a quo, vel quando, aut quomodo conceperit, in conscientiâ non habebat.*”—Acta SS. Jan. t. i. p. 816.

she had conceived, was what, according to her solemn and constant asseveration, she knew not. That it must have been by a man, John of Tynmouth, whom Capgrave quotes, has not scrupled to affirm; but he says it is folly to inquire who ploughed and sowed the land, seeing that through God's blessing on the increase such excellent fruit was brought forth. Scandal, however, (for scandal there was even in the days of the Saints,) fixed upon Eugenius III., King of the Scots, for the father. But even scandal did not impeach* the sincerity of her declarations, which was proved beyond all doubt by the miracles that ensued.

There was a severe law among the Picts, that any damsel who was convicted of committing folly in her father's house, should be thrown from the summit of Duncpelder, one of the highest mountains in that country, and that the seducer should lose his head. To that summit Thametes was carried, protesting her inno-

* It is however impeached by the polemical and Jesuitical historian F. Alford, alias Griffith, who, when he says of Eugenius, that *pater passim creditur*, adds, *Notus etiam fœminarum genius, quæ magnis nominibus sua crimina solent dealbare. Quicquid sit, Kentigerni sanctitatem Deus multo miraculo illustravit, et rosas inter spinas nasci posse ostendit. Nec de parente altero multum curandum.*"—*Annales Ecclesiæ Anglo-Saxonix*, t. ii. p. 20.

cence, and with prayers and tears, lifting up her hands to heaven for deliverance. Her protestations were in vain; not so her prayers : for by miraculous interposition, when she was thrown over the precipice, she descended upon the wings of the wind, like the Tuscan Virgin Clusia, or Pysche, in the most beautiful of classic fables, and alighted unhurt, having neither experienced fear nor danger in the descent. Your true Pagan in ecclesiastical Romance cares as little for miracles as Pantaloon in a Pantomime. King Lot and his people agreed that she had been saved from death by Christian enchantments; and at the command of this relentless father she was taken out several miles to sea, put into a leathern coracle, and set adrift. But the winds and waves were more merciful than man: He who rules them was her protector; in shorter time than the passage could have been performed by any art of navigation, she came to land at a place called Collenros or Culros,* and there, without human help, she brought forth a son.

* F. Alford (T. ii. p. 20) places this upon the Firth of Forth: "*hic habes Kentigerni natalem locum, ad Bodotrice æstuarium, quod Laudoniam a Fyſh dividit. Ibi Colenros olim, ubi fortè nunc Coldingham: quem locum Beda Coludi urbem, Ptolomæus Colaneam, vocavit in Laudoniæ regione.*"

A remarkable personage was at that time dwelling in a monastery at Collenros, Servan was his name : his mother Alpia was daughter to a king of Arabia, and Obeth his father was king of the land of Canaan. This holy Philistine was a Saint of approved prowess and great good nature ; had slain a dragon in single combat, turned water into wine, and once, when a hospitable poor man killed his only pig to entertain him and his religious companions, he supt upon the pork, and restored the pig to life next morning ; a palingenesia this which the eternal and unfortunate boar Serimner undergoes every day in Valhalla, and which the Saints of St. Servan's age, particularly the Scotch, British and Irish Saints, frequently exhibited to the great profit and edification of their hosts. At the hour when Thametes was driven on shore, and safely delivered on the beach, this holy personage heard the song of angels rejoicing in the air, and thereby understood what had happened. So he hastened to the sea-side, and finding there the mother and the new-born babe, saluted the infant with these words ; " blessed art thou, my beloved, who comest in the name of the Lord !" Without delay he took them home to his convent, and baptized them both, naming the boy Kien-

tiern, which is, being interpreted, Chief Lord, and which, by a slight alteration, has become Kentigern. But because the child as he grew up excelled his fellow-scholars in learning, docility, and all good qualities, St. Servan used to call him Mungo, being a term of endearment in what was then the language of that country; and by this name he was afterwards more frequently invoked than by that which he received in baptism.

In the age to which this legend relates, and in that also in which it was written, monasteries were the only schools. The other boys, seeing that Kentigern was a favourite, hated him for that reason, and endeavoured by many malicious tricks to bring him into disgrace. St. Servan had a tame robin, who used to feed from his hand, perch upon his head or shoulder while he was reading or praying, and flutter its wings and sing as if bearing part in his devotions. The young villains one day twisted its head off, and accused Kentigern of having killed it. To prove his innocence, he made a cross upon the head and put it on again, and the bird was nothing the worse for what it had undergone. It was a rule in the monastery that every boy should take his turn for a week to attend the fires at night before they retired to

rest, lest the nocturnal service should at any time be left unperformed for want of light. One night in Kentigern's week, after he had as usual duly performed this duty, the envious boys put out all the fires. At the proper hour he awoke, and perceiving what had been done, gathered a hazel bough, breathed upon it, set it on fire, and then lit the candles. One more attempt was made to bring shame upon him. The cook of the convent died and was buried; and the day after the burial the malicious scholars so far prevailed upon St. Servan that he ordered Kentigern upon his obedience to raise him from the dead; which, as so discrete a person consented to require it, seems to have been thought not an unreasonable exercise for one who was preparing to graduate as a Saint. The obedient cook came out of his grave at the call, and edified all the convent by an account of what he had seen in the other world.

Kentigern, however, who was now grown up, thought it time to depart from a place where his presence excited so many evil feelings; and knowing by revelation that this intention was conformable to the will of Providence, he stole away. The way which he took brought him to the river Mallena; a high tide had caused the stream to overflow, so that it would have

been impassable, if that same Power who opened a way through the Red Sea for the Children of Israel had not made the waters retire to the right and left, and leave a dry path for him. Presently afterwards he crost a little salt-water inlet by a bridge; but no sooner was he over, than the waters flowed in in such abundance as to destroy that passage for evermore, and the Mallena was forced out of its own channel into that of the Ledon. Just as this change was effected St. Servan reached the bank in pursuit of the fugitive, and seeing him on the opposite side, he cried out, "Oh my child, light of mine eyes, and staff of my old age, why hast thou forsaken me! Remember how I took thee, even from thy mother's womb, and cherished thee, and instructed thee, till this day! Forsake not thou my grey hairs!" The young Saint wept at his words, and answered, "My Father, thou seest that what I have done is God's will, which we cannot change, but must of necessity obey." St. Servan then besought him to open a way again through the waters by his prayers, "that I may come to thee," he said, "and become a son instead of a father, a disciple instead of a master, and attend upon thee as thy companion till the end of my life." But Kentigern with many tears made

answer, "Return, I beseech thee, O my Father! instruct thy scholars by precept and example, and correct them by discipline. He by whom good actions are rewarded will requite thee for all the benefits which thou hast conferred upon me. Thou hast fought the good fight, and hast compleated thy course. I must go whither he hath sent me who hath set me apart for his service from my mother's womb." So they mutually gave each other a blessing, and parted for ever in this world...They who can enter into the spirit of monastic romance, will feel that this situation is beautifully conceived.

The man of God proceeding on his appointed way, took up his abode at Glasgow, and there obtained such reputation for his learning and holiness of life, that in the twenty-fifth year of his age, upon the appointment of the king and clergy of Cumbria, he was consecrated to the episcopal office by an Irish Bishop, according to the usage of the British and Scottish Christians in those days. His diocese included the whole Cumbrian kingdom, which extended from the Roman Wall to the Firth of Forth, and from sea to sea; and his cathedral was in the city of Glasgow. Applying himself forthwith to his episcopal duties, we are told that he converted the unbaptized, brought back heretics and relapsed heathens to the faith, de-

stroyed idols, built churches, and determined the boundaries of parishes, performing his visitations not on horseback, but afoot, after the manner of the apostles. His manner of life meantime was of the most hagi-heroical austerity. He wore a most rough cilice next his skin, and over it a garment of goat-skins, with a close hood or cowl, a white alb, and a stole. His crozier was neither finely wrought, nor ornamented with gold and jewels; a plain staff like a shepherd's crook contented him, and he had ever a manual in his hand, ready for his office. He slept always in a stone which was hollowed like a coffin, and with a stone for his pillow; and rising from a short sleep, used to immerse himself to the neck in cold water while he chanted the whole psalter. Throughout his whole life he abstained from meat and fermented liquor; and it was only every third or fourth day that he broke his fast, taking bread and milk, or butter, or cheese. During Lent he withdrew from all human society into the wilderness, and either lived upon wild roots, or by divine assistance fasted the whole forty days. On Good Friday he past the night and day in frequent genuflections, scourging his bare body; and on Easter Eve, till the very hour of the Resurrection, he remained hidden in a sepulchre, except during the celebration of divine

service, and employed the whole time in the supererogatory good work of flagellating himself.

Such monastic virtues were of course rewarded with an abundant display of monastic miracles. Sometimes while he was officiating, a snow white dove, whose bill shone like burnished gold, was seen to settle upon his head. Frequently that head was veiled in the brightness of a cloud of glory, and sometimes his whole body was so glorified that it appeared like a pillar of fire, the effulgence whereof blinded the beholders. At other times when he was performing mass, the odour of his living sanctity was diffused through the church, healing various diseases, and filling all who were present with ineffable delight. During a season of scarcity he gave away the whole of his seed-corn to the poor, and sowed his fields with sand, nothing doubting but that God would provide a harvest; and in answer to his faith it proved a most luxuriant crop of the finest wheat. The better to eschew idleness he worked in the fields himself, and not having oxen for the plough, he called stags from the forest, who came in obedience, and bowed their necks to the yoke. After the day's work was done they returned to their lair, and came again duly when their services were wanted. A wolf one day

took the liberty of eating one of the team. When St. Kentigern heard of this misdeed, he stretched out his hand towards the forest, and commanded the culprit to appear before him forthwith, and make satisfaction for his offence. The wolf immediately came running, and howling piteously in fear. The Saint, however, more merciful than Isgrim expected, only condemned him to take the stag's place in the team, and perform his share of work for that season: according the wolf was yoked with the remaining stags, and having ploughed nine good acres (Scotch measure) was discharged.

This silly legend occurs more than once in the Acts of the Saints, but here in the life of St. Kentigern it may be forgiven, for the sake of a beautiful passage which accompanies it. Many persons coming to witness and admire the extraordinary sight of a wolf yoked with stags and drawing a plough, the Saint said unto them, "Men and brethren, why marvel ye? Before man became disobedient to his Maker, not animals alone, but even the elements themselves obeyed him. Now, alas, because of his prevarication, all things are changed. The lion rends him, the wolf devours, the serpent bites; water drowns, fire burns, air infects, earth

itself, as if it were made iron, oftentimes destroys him by famine ; and as the height and consummation of all evil, man not only rages against man, but, by committing sin, becomes his own worst enemy. But inasmuch as many holy men are found perfect before the Lord in innocence, and pure obedience, in holiness, in the love of God, in faith and in justice, they as it were recover the ancient right of natural dominion, having authority over creatures, and elements, and diseases and death.”

It happened once that St. Kentigern, having distributed in alms the whole of his stores, was in want of provisions for his own monastery, and applied for assistance to Morken, or Mark, the king of that petty kingdom. This personage appears not to have been the same sovereign by whom the Saint was invited to his episcopal office ; for supposing that if the Bishop could work miracles he had no occasion for any human succour, and jesting irreverently upon that supposition, he bade him cast his cares upon the Lord and look to him for support : for thus he exhorted others to do, and it became him now to put his own lessons in practice. “Thou fearest God,” said the profane Prince, “and keepest his commandments, yet thou art destitute of all good things, and even in want of

necessary food ; whereas I, . . . who neither seek the kingdom of God nor his righteousness, . . . I am in prosperity and plenty. Thy faith therefore is plainly fallacious, and that which thou preachest is proved to be false." Kentigern reasoned with him, but to no effect, and Morken broke off the conversation by pointing to his granaries, and telling him in mockery he was welcome to all that they contained, provided he could remove it to his own dwelling-place by faith alone, without human assistance. The Saint took him at his word, and lifting up his hands, called upon the Lord in prayer. Behold, the Clyde, which was then flowing quietly beside them, rose suddenly and overflowed its banks, spread round the granaries, floated them from their foundations, bore them down the stream, and deposited them at the Saint's abode at Mollingdenar, the granaries being nothing the worse for the removal, and not a grain of the corn wet. It must have been a grand sight to have seen them shoot the falls !

So far was this great miracle from producing any good effect upon the incorrigible King Morken, that it only made the Saint an object of his hatred, and one day he kicked him with such violence that the blow brought him to the ground. Saints were not persons to be injured

with impunity; the offending foot swelled, and the tumour became so painful, that in no long time it produced death. Kentigern found his own life in danger from the kinsmen of the deceased, and withdrawing from Cumbria, travelled toward Menevia, where St. David was then flourishing in the full blossom of holiness. On the way he converted many Pagans at *Caer Leon*, and built a church there; ..whether *Chester*, or *Caer Leon* upon the *Usk*, he meant, has not been determined, both places lying in his way. After he had sojourned some time with the great Saint of Wales, *Cadwallon*, King of that country, gave him ground whereon to erect a monastery, at a place called *Elgy*, or *Elwy*, where he established an episcopal see, and raised such a community as never existed but in the golden days of monachism. He had nine hundred and sixty-five brethren there under his absolute authority; three hundred of these were uneducated men, whose office it was to till the lands and tend the cattle belonging to the convent; three hundred more of the same description were employed within the building in preparing food and other domestic concerns; the remaining three hundred and sixty-five were literates, whose business it was to perform divine service. They

were divided into companies or watches ; when one set had finished their service, another was ready immediately to begin, so that an everlasting course of prayer and thanksgiving was kept up without intermission night and day. *Laus perpetua* this everlasting service is called, and the perfection of monastic life, as far as relates to worship, can be carried no farther.

Here it happened one night that, having, according to his custom, recited the whole psalter while up to his neck in cold water, he felt thoroughly chilled, and requested a favourite disciple to bring him some fire. The youth ran to the hearth, and not finding a chafing dish, nor any thing to answer the same purpose, at hand, took the hot coals in the skirts of his habit, and carried them safely to his master by virtue of faith. This was the disciple who succeeded him in that see, and left it his own name of St. Asaph. During his abode here Kentigern saw the soul of St. David escorted by a multitude of angels to the gate of Paradise, at which our Saviour himself met and welcomed him !

Kentigern went seven times from Elwy to Rome, where his consecration was confirmed by Pope Gregory, the spiritual Apostle of the Anglo-Saxons ; that pontiff, it is added, acknow-

ledging that Kentigern had been called to the episcopal office by the Providence of God, but nevertheless being* hardly persuaded to supply the informalities of the ceremony. At length Rederech, a new king of Cumbria, who had been baptized in Ireland by the disciples of St. Patrick, and who hoped, by restoring Christianity in his kingdom, to remove the famine and other calamities with which it had been visited because of the apostasy of the people, invited him back to Glasgow. Accordingly the Saint returned, leaving St. Asaph to succeed him in Wales, and taking with him six hundred and sixty of his monks. King Rederech came out to meet him, with a great multitude of people, and with more in company than either he or the people were aware of. Kentigern, however, knew who were present, and having given his blessing to the king and his countrymen, he raised his voice, and in the name of the Lord commanded all those who envied the salvation of men, and resisted God's

* “ *Sanctus verò Papa illum virum Dei et Spiritus Sancti gratiâ plenum intelligens, consecrationem ejus, quam a Deo, noverat provenisse, confirmavit : ipsoque multoties petente, et vix impetrante, quæ deerant consecrationi ejus supplens, in opus ministerii à Spiritu Sancto illi injuncti destinavit.*” — Acta SS. Jan. t. i. p. 819.

word, to depart forthwith, that they might be no hindrance to them who should believe. Incontinently, in the sight of all, an innumerable multitude of wicked Spirits, horrible to behold both for their stature and shape, fled away from the company. The Saint failed not to take advantage of the awe which this miracle excited, telling the people they had now with their own eyes seen what the Spirits were by whom they were seduced to adore dumb Idols, or the senseless Elements, which were creatures appointed by God for their use and service. Woden himself, he said, had been but a mortal man, whose body was reduced to dust, and whose soul was now lying in Hell fire, there to be tormented for ever. He then proceeded to instruct the willing and believing multitude, and while he was preaching, the ground whereon he stood marvellously elevated itself under him, and formed a high hillock in the midst of a plain field called Holdelin.

All things now succeeded to his heart's content. The people believed, the earth yielded its fruits, the kingdom prospered; the Queen, who had long been barren, brought forth a son, by virtue of his prayers, and that son lived to excel all his predecessors in holiness and in temporal prosperity. St. Kentigern converted

the Picts of Galloway, and the country of Albania, and sent missionaries to the Orkneys, Norway, and Iceland. Wherever he went the blind received sight, and the dumb spake, and the ears of the deaf were opened; the lame recovered the use of their limbs, and the paralytic their strength; lepers were healed, and devils were cast out. There was healing in the crumbs which fell from his hand, and in the drops from his cup, and in the touch of his garments; yea, the sick who came within the shadow of his body were restored to health. Rain and hail and snow, (not to mention a Scotch mist,) however heavily they were falling all around, never touched him, or any part of his apparel, feeling as strong a power of repulsion in his sanctity, as in the curse of Kehama, and that power even acted as an umbrella for all his disciples who accompanied him.

Austere and perfect as St. Kentigern was, he was indulgent to human frailty. Queen Langueth, the wife of Rederech, was unfaithful to her husband's bed, and in the blindness of her adulterous passion, gave her paramour a ring which the King had entrusted to her keeping, and which he was indiscreet enough to wear publicly. Rederech, being informed of this, took the noble out hunting, and retired with

him apart after the heat of the chase, to the banks of the Clyde, where the adulterer, unsuspecting of danger, fell asleep in the shade. The King then saw the fatal ring upon his finger, and upon this full proof of guilt, hardly could refrain from killing him upon the spot. He contented himself, however, for the present, with drawing the ring gently off, threw it into the river, and on his return to the palace called sternly upon the Queen to produce it. She sent for it secretly with all speed to her paramour; and when it was not forthcoming, all that the intercession of the nobles could obtain for her was only a respite of three days before she should be put to death. The miserable Queen, who saw that there was no other hope of deliverance, dispatched a trusty messenger to Kentigern, confessing her guilt, and entreating him to provide a way for her escape. There was no occasion for this messenger to deliver his errand; it had already been revealed to the Saint, and that holy man bade him go to the Clyde, throw a hook and line in the water, and bring him the first fish which he should catch. A salmon was presently taken, from whose inside he took the ring, and sent it to the poor penitent adulteress, who produced it to the King triumphantly, as a miraculous

proof of her innocence. Astonished at such a miracle, Rederech denounced the severest vengeance upon the unfortunate informers, and on his knees intreated the Queen's pardon. Langueth kept her own secret with due prudence; but she had grace enough to desire that no one might suffer on her account, and to make it the condition of her forgiving the king, that he should forgive her accusers. The sin-score was settled with St. Kentigern in the regular way, and from that time she amended her life.

The Saints of that age (which was the golden age of Saints) were upon as friendly terms with each other as the emperors and kings of this. St. Columba came from Iona with a great retinue of disciples to visit St. Kentigern; and St. Kentigern with such another suite went out to receive him. Each divided his train into three companies, according to age; the juniors led the way, those of mature years followed, and grey-haired venerable men closed the procession. St. Kentigern's company chanted as they went "In the ways of the Lord great is the glory of the Lord," and "The way of the righteous is made straight:" St. Columba's, "The Saints shall go on from virtue to virtue; their God shall be seen in Sion; Hallelujah!"

Before they met* Columba declared to his companions that he saw a fiery column descend upon Kentigern's head, and condense thereon in the form of a crown of gold. They embraced and kissed each other; and when they parted they exchanged their pastoral staves. That which Columba gave was long preserved as a relic in the Church of St. Wilfred at Ripon.

St. Kentigern performed a good-natured miracle at this meeting. Some of St. Columba's attendants could not resist their old propensity for sheep-stealing, when a favourable opportunity occurred for indulging it in the Lowlands. They beat Kentigern's shepherd, and carried off a ram; but no sooner had they cut off the ram's head, in hungry anticipation, no doubt, of the broth and the burnt wool, than it was converted into stone; and what was more terrible, stuck to the hands of the man who held it, so that he could by no means rid himself of the portentous appendage. The headless body ran back to the flock, doing apparently as well without a head, as many persons appear to do with an empty one. This poor body had reason to complain of the catas-

* The place of their meeting is fixed by Hector Boëtius at Dunkeld.

trophe; for upon the confession of the thieves and the contrition which they professed, St. Kentigern not only relieved the one offender from the stone head, (which, says the legend, is preserved to this day, in the same place, a proof of the miracle,) but presented the party with the living, though headless carcase. Two other notable miracles he performed in his latter days. He made a cross of sea-sand without the admixture of any other material; it was compact, solid and durable, and many persons who came to visit it in devotion, were healed of many diseases by its virtue. And he erected a mill upon the Clyde which would neither work on a Sunday, nor grind any stolen corn.

The Saint lived and flourished in miracles till he attained the prodigious age of an hundred and eighty five. The Bollandists candidly admit that there may be reason to doubt this part of his history, and Father Cressy, the Camel-gulper, (following, as usual, his guide Father Alford,) lopt off the hundred, in conformity, he says, to the true computation of Bishop Ushher. Yet methinks this longevity might be admitted without hesitation by all who believe the beginning of the legend, or the end, or any of the intermediate adventures.

And indeed the close of the legend requires that it should be admitted, for it states that, in consequence of the extreme relaxation produced by this extreme old age, it was necessary to support his under jaw with a chin-stay. At length he perceived that the hour of his departure was nigh, and called together his disciples to give them his last benediction. But the death of St. Kentigern was to be not less portentous in all its circumstance than his birth. One of the disciples, in the name of all his brethren, interrupted the valediction, and said, "Father and master, we know that it is thy desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; nevertheless, we beseech thee, have mercy upon us who are thy children in the Lord! When at any time we have through human frailty erred and gone astray, we have confessed our fault in thy sight, and endeavoured to amend it according to thy directions. Ask therefore now for us of the Lord, that we may be permitted to leave this vale of tears with thee, and enter with thee into his joy; for of a truth we believe that whatsoever thou shalt ask, the Lord will grant. And it seemeth to us not fitting that a prelate without his clergy, a pastor without any of his flock, a father without his children, should enter into the joy of his Lord."

This proof of their affection moved the departing Saint, and collecting breath as he could, he replied, “ The will of God be done with you and with me, and let Him dispose of us as to Him seems best.” This was all that he expressed in words, but inwardly and in spirit he prayed that their desire might be granted. Behold an Angel appeared, and said, “ Kentigern, elect and beloved of God, rejoice thou and be glad, for the desire of thy heart is heard, and it shall be done to thy disciples according to thy prayer. To-morrow ye shall go out from the body of this death into everlasting life, and the Lord will be with you, and ye with him, for evermore. And forasmuch as thine whole life in this world hath been a continued martyrdom, it hath pleased the Lord that thou shouldst have a gentler dissolution than other men. Give order therefore that a warm bath be made ready to-morrow, and go thou into it; and there, without pain, thou shalt render up thy spirit into the hands of the Lord in peace. Let thy brethren enter afterwards, and they also, being delivered from the bonds of death, shall ascend with thee, in the splendour of holiness, to the kingdom of Heaven.”

Accordingly, so it was done. The bath was

made ready, and the Saint being placed in it, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, then bowed his head, and fell asleep in the Lord. As soon as his body was removed, one of the brethren entered to take his place, and expired there in like manner; and thus one after the other, all in turn went into the bath, before the water was cold, and died there; and all in company with their spiritual father ascended to the celestial abodes.

When our Kalendar was purged at the Reformation, directions were given that respect should be had to Saints of the bloodroyal. This must have been the chief reason why St. Kentigern's name was inserted (though not indeed in red letters) in the Kalendar, prefixed to that liturgy which gave occasion for the Scotch covenant, and fired the train of rebellion that had been laid through both kingdoms. Perhaps another motive was, that as his other name Mungo had become not uncommon in Scotland, his memory, owing to that circumstance, might still have been popular. Yet we may reasonably wonder that any motives should have prevailed for its insertion, seeing how entirely fabulous the legend is in all its parts.

PART II.

THE REFORMATION.—DISSENTERS.—
METHODISTS.

I WAS walking alone in Howray, looking upon the Church and upon Skiddaw behind it, which was then in all the glory of a midsummer sunset. Sir Thomas approached, and laid his hand upon my shoulder ; I started, not at his appearance, (for I had seen him coming,) but because I felt the touch. What, said he, with a smile, did you suppose that I could not make myself sensible to tact as well as sight, and assume corporeality as easily as form?... But tell me, where were your thoughts when I recalled them ?

MONTESINOS.

Where I shall soon be myself, Sir Thomas, .. with those that are departed. The weight of time and of eternity was on my spirit. I was contemplating that Church and yonder Mountain. Seven centuries have gone by since the Church was founded, and there Skiddaw has

stood since the foundation of the hills was laid. My years will be presently like a tale that is told. These will remain; the one unchangeable, the other I trust never to be changed in its destination and uses, whatever renovations the structure may require.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Is there any thing mournful in that thought to a religious mind?

MONTESINOS.

The thought is solemn rather than mournful. It is only our mortal duration that we measure by visible and mensurable objects; and there is nothing mournful in the contemplation for one who knows that the Creator made him to be the image of his own eternity, and who feels that in the desire for immortality he has sure proof of his capacity for it...I had been also thinking of the change in human institutions; a thought naturally connected with any permanent monuments whether of art or nature. The shadows glide over that mountain, and the clouds collect there, and the sun glorifies it, as they did when the Druids performed their rites within yonder circle of stones, when the Romans and Romanized Britons erected altars to Jupiter and Belatucadrus, and when the Danes offered up victims to Thor and Woden.

The Church, too, has undergone its changes. The Rood-loft has disappeared, ..not a bell rings on St. Kentigern's Day, ..and not a trace of the Saint remains in his own parish.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Do you hold that part of the change for good or for evil?

MONTESINOS.

Touching the Rood-loft, I know not that the Calvaries in Catholic countries lead to any superstition at this time. Formerly there were foul abuses connected with such representations, and it was the detection of some such that induced Elizabeth reluctantly to give up her intention of having the Crucifix retained in our Churches, as it is in the Lutheran. Upon that point, I confess, I should have held rather with the Queen than with Archbishop Parker. But for the Saint, it was quite necessary that the Romish Demi-gods should be sent packing after their Heathen predecessors, the legends of the one being every whit as fabulous as those of the other. Yet I wish it had been deemed advisable to have winnowed the Kalendar, and left in it every name which is entitled to respect and gratitude.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And why might not this have been done?

MONTESINOS.

Because the whole system of Romish hagiology is inseparably connected with fraud and falsehood. I abhor it the more for what we have lost in consequence of its audacious and impious profligacy. Festivals, when duly observed, attach men to the civil and religious institutions of their country ; it is an evil, therefore, when they fall into disuse. For the same reason the loss of local observances is to be regretted :...who is there that does not remember their effect upon himself in early life ? St. Kentigern could not have been allowed to retain his honours, for there is no compromising with a system of impudent and villainous imposture. But I wish the name of some holy man, whether canonized or not, whose history would bear inquiry, and whose example might serve for edification, had been substituted in his stead.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Why not your more fortunate St. Herbert, who has left his name to the island which he inhabited ?

MONTESINOS.

He, too, had his yearly festival here in Romish times : on the 13th of April the Vicar of Crosthwaite used to perform mass in his chapel on the island, to the joint honour of the

Hermit and St. Cuthbert, for they had been friends while they lived, and after death their memories were not divided. Forty days' indulgence was granted to every one who devoutly attended. What a happy holyday must that have been for all these vales; and how joyous on a fine spring day must the lake have appeared with boats and banners from every chapelry, ..and how must the chapel have adorned that little isle, giving a human and religious character to the solitude! Its ruins are still there, in such a state of total dilapidation that they only make the island, mere wilderness as it has now become, more melancholy. But St. Herbert, I think, could not hold a place in a reformed kalendar; the little that is related of him belongs to a legend grievously disfigured with fiction. Nor indeed do I think that merely to have been a hermit should entitle any one to respectful commemoration.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Hermits, as well as Monks, Montesinos, have been useful in their day. Your state of society is not the better because it provides no places of religious retirement for those who desire and need it.

MONTESINOS.

Certainly not. I consider the dissolution of

the Religious Houses as the greatest evil that accompanied the Reformation.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Take from such communities their irrevocable vows, their onerous laws, their ascetic practices; cast away their mythology, and with it the frauds and follies connected therewith, and how beneficial would they then be found! What opportunities would they afford to literature, what aid to devotion, what refuge to affliction, what consolation to humanity!

MONTESINOS.

And what relief to society, which, as it becomes more crowded in all its walks, and as education and intelligence are more and more diffused, must in every succeeding generation feel more pressingly the want of such institutions! Considering the condition of single women in the middle classes, it is not speaking too strongly to assert, that the establishment of protestant nunneries, upon a wise plan and liberal scale, would be the greatest benefit that could possibly be conferred upon these kingdoms. The name, indeed, is deservedly obnoxious; for nunneries, such as they exist in Roman-Catholic countries, and such as at this time are being re-established in this, are connected with the worst corruptions of popery,

being at once nurseries of superstition and of misery. In their least objectionable point of view they serve as Bedlams, with this difference, that they are not intended for the cure, but for the promotion of religious madness. But they serve, also, as Penitentiaries, in which bigoted, or hard-hearted and ambitious parents condemn their daughters to imprisonment for life. This dreadful abuse is so notorious, that such institutions would not be tolerated even in superstitious countries, unless some weighty advantages were found in them, whereof the great body of the people are sensible. And how easily might those advantages be obtained in communities founded upon the principles of our own Church, and liable to no such evils !

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The Reformation itself has rendered them more necessary, by relieving the clergy from their obligation to a single life.

MONTESINOS.

Sir Thomas, I can account for any thing in your controversial writings, except for the sort of temper which manifests itself whenever you touch upon that point.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

O Montesinos ! what errors are there which may not be explained by the frailty and the

sinfulness of poor human nature? They who are under the direction of an erring conscience may, in a certain sense, properly be said to be possessed: wonder not, therefore, that the same possession, which divested me of my natural humanity, should, in this other and more excusable point, have corrupted my judgement also! The angry feeling which I betrayed upon that subject had its rise partly in personal considerations. My early bent had been toward the ecclesiastical profession, and I was deterred from pursuing it, only by the obligation of celibacy which* it would have imposed. But looking always upon it as a holier way of life, and perhaps thinking sometimes that in certain respects it might have

* "*Quin et evolvendis orthodoxorum voluminibus non segnem operam impendit: Augustini libros de Civitate Dei publicè professus est adhuc penè adolescens auditorio frequenti; nec puduit, nec pœnituit sacerdotes ac senes à juvene profano sacra discere. Interim et ad pietatis studium totum animum appulit, vigiliis, jejuniis, precationibus, aliisque consimilibus progymnasmatis sacerdotium meditans. Quà quidem in re non paulò plus ille sapiebat, quam plerique isti, qui temerè ad tam arduam professionem ingerunt sese, nullo priùs sui periculo facto. Neque quicquam obstat quo minus sese huic vitæ generi addiceret, nisi quod uxoris desiderium non posset excutere. Maluit igitur maritus esse castus, quam sacerdos impurus.*"—Erasm. Epist. L. x. Ep. 30. 536.

proved a happier one, some dissatisfaction with myself was naturally felt when the subject of clerical celibacy was forced upon my attention. “ Our most unreasonable prejudices are generally the strongest.”* I was not willing to admit that those persons, who protested against this obligation, as being contrary both to the letter and spirit of the scriptures, had perceived a plain and manifest truth, ..one, too, of great importance to society, .. where I had been blind; and I fell into the common fault, (not the less reprehensible for being common,) of imputing the worst motives to those from whom I differed in opinion. We carry our habits of mind with us from this world into the next, be they good or evil, and such as they are is the lot which they have prepared for us; but our errors are mortal, and for them there is no resurrection. Luther and I are friends and associates now, and Frith and Bainham have forgiven me...I offer no excuse for the means which I employed against the Reformers, farther than that in that unhappy and unchristian course of conduct, I was acting in the spirit of the age. Be you thankful that your lot has fallen in times, when, though there may be as many evil tongues and

* Jonathan Boucher.

exasperated spirits, there are none who have fire and faggot at command ! But it should be remembered that the Reformation had its dark side, and with that side it presented itself to my view. I grieved over a spoliation, which cannot even now be called to mind without regret ; I resisted opinions which in their sure consequences led to anarchy in all things, tending not only to overthrow the foundations of authority both in church and state, and thus to the destruction of all government and all order, but to subvert the moral law, and dethrone conscience from its seat in the heart of man. The evil which I apprehended came to pass. That I did not with the same perspicuity foresee the eventual good, was because it was less certain, and more remote.

MONTESINOS.

Perhaps, also, because you regarded the natural and probable course of human affairs, without sufficiently considering the ways of Providence.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

My friend, let no man presume that he can see prospectively into the ways of Providence ! His part is to contemplate them in the past, and trust in them for the future ; but, so trusting, to act always upon motives of human prudence,

directed by religious principles. I beheld a system of profligate robbery, a transfer of property from religious establishments to knaves and courtiers, in which Gardiner and Bonner, afterwards the most inhuman agents of a bloody reign, acquiesced; I knew what convulsions Muncer had excited, and we had seen also in that age the consequences of fanaticism carried to their full extent by the Anabaptists. Are you quite safe from a repetition of either evil? Time passes on, and the fashions of the mind, as well as of the body, change; but the mind and the body remain the same in all ages, and are subject to the same accidents of disease and error.

MONTESINOS.

This I have learnt from history: and the earth itself affords an emblem of it. Let a deep trench be opened in the cleanest field, or the most highly cultivated garden, and when the mould that is thrown out shall have lain long enough to be clothed with vegetation, it will be covered with the same plants which overran the surface before it had ever been disturbed by the spade or by the plough. The system of spoliation we have seen renewed in these days, as the first effect of the French Revolution wherever it extended. We have seen, also, in

the triumph of democratical fanaticism, a counterpart of the Munster Tragedy, Marat and Hebert and Robespierre being the Johns of Leyden and the Knipperdollins of democracy. Most persons can discover religious madness, and are, generally, too ready to suspect it ; but few are aware that political insanity is in these days even more common, and more contagious.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

From which have you most to apprehend ?... for both diseases are rife among you at this time !

MONTESINOS.

I think, from the political plague. America is in more danger from religious fanaticism. The government there not thinking it necessary to provide religious instruction for the people in any of the new states, the prevalence of superstition, and that, perhaps, in some wild and terrible shape, may be looked for as one likely consequence of this great and portentous omission. An Old Man of the Mountain might find dupes and followers as readily as the All-friend Jemima ; and the next Aaron Burr who seeks to carve a kingdom for himself out of the overgrown territories of the Union, may discover that fanaticism is the most effective weapon with which ambition can arm itself ; that the way

for both is prepared by that immorality which the want of religion naturally and necessarily induces, and that Camp Meetings may be very well directed to forward the designs of a Military Prophet. Were there another Mahommed to arise, there is no part of the world where he would find more scope, or fairer opportunity, than in that part of the Anglo-American Union into which the elder states continually discharge the restless part of their population, leaving Laws and Gospel to overtake it if they can, for in the march of modern colonization both are left behind. But in these kingdoms fanaticism, though it abound among us, and is continually showing itself, and seeking to enlarge its border, is kept down by the influence of civilization, and finds everywhere something to controul or to correct it. If a breach be made in our sanctuary, it will be by the combined forces of Popery, Dissent, and Unbelief, fighting under a political flag.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

We have spoken of the Roman-Catholics. They have an assignable and obvious motive, seeking the overthrow of your Church as the first and great step toward the re-establishment of their own. But what can the Dissenters

propose to themselves that they should join in this unholy alliance?

MONTESINOS.

The better part of the Dissenters, those, I mean, who are more influenced by a religious than by a sectarian feeling, keep aloof from it. But the principle of non-conformity in religion is very generally connected with political discontent; the old leaven is still in the mass, and, whenever there is thunder in the atmosphere, it begins to work. In the time of the American war they were wholly with the Americans; and, during that of the French Revolution, their wishes were not with the government, nor their voice with the voice of the country. At contested elections their weight is uniformly thrown into the opposition scale; at times, when an expression of public opinion is called for, their exertions are always on the factious side. They are what Swift called them, schismatics in temporals as well as spirituals. The truth is that, as Burleigh said of the English Papists, they are but half Englishmen at heart; for they acknowledge only one part of the two-fold Constitution under which they live, and, consequently, sit loose in their attachment to the other. Of the two strands of the cable one

has been cut through. Yet it is pretended that the existence of the Dissenting interest, as it is called, is advantageous to the nation; and this paradox has been so often, and so confidently advanced, that it is now one of those received fallacies by which the people are deluded.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There is no evil from which Providence may not educe some good; and yet the evil is not, for that reason, the less to be deprecated. Upon what grounds is this paradox maintained? I should think it not more preposterous to assert that a wen, or an encysted tumour, was an agreeable and useful part of the body which it diseased and deformed.

MONTESINOS.

It is argued that they have kept alive a more influential spirit of religion in these kingdoms than would otherwise have been preserved; that in this respect they have acted upon the clergy of the Church of England, as Protestantism itself is known to have affected the Church of Rome; and that hereby they have prevented the Establishment from sinking into that state of torpid indifference, and general inactivity, to which, the persons who advance this opinion affirm, religious establishments have an inherent and constant tendency. And

therefore, they say, the clergy are at this time, as a body, more learned, more decorous, and more zealous than they would have been, if there had been no invidious eyes upon their conduct, and no jealousy or emulation to stimulate them to their proper duty.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The division between Papist and Protestant would have sufficed for this, even if the representation were true, to the full extent, in all its parts.

MONTESINOS.

Moreover, it is said, that had it not been for the dissenting ministers, a considerable portion of the people would have been left without any religious instruction.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

In that point there had been a great sin of omission in the government, a sin which is chargeable also, in no slight degree, upon the heads of the clergy. It is not more directly the duty of a government to provide for the defence and safety of the commonwealth, than it is to provide religious instruction for the people: and, whenever the population had outgrown the means provided, then it ought to have been the business, as it was the duty, of the heads of the clergy, to have laid before the

government a representation of the deficiency which appeared, and the necessity of remedying it. So far, therefore, as the dissenting ministers supplied the want of other religious instructors, and, so supplying it, delayed the only regular and convenient remedy, evil was done by the very prevention of good ; and there was this farther evil, that the teachers, who thus found room and opportunity to interlope, inculcated a feeling of enmity toward one branch of the constitution. Now nothing is more certain than that religion is the basis* upon which civil government rests, ..that from religion power derives its authority, laws their efficacy, and both their seal and sanction. And it is necessary that this religion be established for the security of the state, and for the welfare of the people, who would, otherwise, be moved to and fro with every wind of doctrine. A state is secure in proportion as the people

* The reader, who may wish to see this proved upon political and constitutional grounds, is referred to Mr. Kendall's *Letters on the State of Ireland, the Roman-Catholic Question, and the Merits of Constitutional Religious Distinctions* (pp. 798. 810. 987) ; a work of great ability. The subject has been treated in a religious view by Philip Skelton in his *Deism Revealed*. (vol. i. pp. 49. 51, second edit.) Let me take this opportunity of observing, that Skelton's book might very usefully be included among the publications of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.

are attached to its institutions ; it is therefore the first, and plainest rule of sound polity, that the people be trained up in the way they should go : the state that neglects this prepares its own destruction : and they who train them in any other way are undermining it. Nothing in abstract science can be more certain than these positions are.

MONTESINOS.

All of which are, nevertheless, denied by our professors of the arts babblative and scribbulative ; some in the audacity of evil designs, and others in the glorious assurance of impenetrable ignorance.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The evil which your schismatics have occasioned is not confined to their own country : they have prevented the extension of the Protestant faith.

MONTESINOS.

Mr. Butler has observed, with a Roman-Catholic's feeling, that the Protestant religion would not at this day have been established in any part of Germany, had it not been for the protection afforded it by the* kings of France.

* “ It may truly be said, that if there be a Protestant state from the Vistula to the Rhine, or a Mahometan state between the Danube and the Mediterranean, its existence is owing to the Bourbon monarchs.”—*Germanic Empire*, p. 133.

It may with better foundation be said, that the Protestant cause sustained more serious injury from the English Puritans, than from all the efforts of Spain and Austria combined, and of France also, when France put forth its strength against it. The tyranny which they exercised during their opprobrious reign, and the anarchy by which, as a necessary consequence, it was succeeded, were alike injurious to religion. Never in any other age did so many persons fall off to Popery on the one hand, and to Infidelity on the other; and these evil seeds, having had time and room to grow and spread, continued to flourish after the Church of England was re-established. For the Church never perfectly recovered its proper power; the roots of its authority had been shaken; and its discipline, having been long suspended, could not be re-established without exciting greater difficulties than there was any disposition to encounter; so it fell at length into disuse.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Men become infidels easily, if they have never truly been believers, .. if they have been imperfectly grounded in religion, or brought up in one of its corrupted forms, against which the reasonable heart of man revolts. Presumption and vanity, acting upon ignorance, betray many

into this sin, according to the proverb which saith, “ the ignorant hath an eagle’s wings and an owl’s eyes.” Some are led astray by unfavourable circumstances, of ill teaching, ill example, or neglect, and thus, even where there is not an evil heart of unbelief, find themselves wandering like sheep without a shepherd. The press has long been actively employed, and never so actively as now, in undermining the foundations of faith, and effacing all respect for religious institutions, and for religion itself. And in men thus prepared, the propagandist of Atheism and the Jesuit both find facile converts, according to the course of the times,.. and the age or constitution of the subject. Indeed, the transition between Popery and Infidelity is in either direction short and easy, and therefore it is frequently made. A man proposes to himself the false dilemma, that, in matters of religion, he must either submit absolutely to authority, or reject it altogether ; and he chooses one or the other alternative according to his temper. Many a man takes the one part in youth and health, the other in age and sickness ; and, having lived without God in the world, dies with a discharge in full from the Priest, as a clear acquittance from all responsibility ; and with a candle in his hand, to show

him the way in the dark ! These are changes in which the rise and progress of error are plainly to be traced : the motives are tangible ; Infidelity gives a license in this world for the gratification of all desires and propensities, however sinful, and the Priest grants a pardon, under the Great Seal of Rome, which is to be valid in the next. This is just as intelligible now as it was in the age of Leo X. But how is it that your Dissenters increase in number, when no new grounds for dissent have arisen, and they themselves have long been ashamed of those fanatical objections to the Established Church, which were the original grounds of their separation ?

MONTESINOS.

Their ministers wear the cassock ; none of them, except a handful of Unitarians, would now advance any serious objections against the Liturgy, which was such an abomination to their predecessors ; and perhaps there is not one among them who would think it necessary to keep Christmas-day as a fast, or deem it idolatrous to bow at the name of his Redeemer. We must find the solution of your question in temporal considerations, not in the perversities, freaks and infirmities of crooked, crazy, and queasy consciences.

Any degree of intolerance short of that full extent which the Papal Church exercises where it has the power, acts upon the opinions which it is intended to suppress like pruning upon vigorous plants ; they grow the stronger for it. By this sort of intolerance the Dissenters were vexed and strengthened from the time of the Restoration till the Revolution. There ensued an interval then during which the Dissenters went with the Government in their political wishes and feelings. This continued, with the exception of the few latter years of Queen Anne's reign, from the time when the Toleration Act was past, to the commencement of the troubles in America ; during that interval the asperity of sectarian feeling was mitigated, and the Dissenters can scarcely be said to have existed as a party in the state. They consisted of the Quakers, who stood as much aloof from the other sects as from the Church, and of the Three Denominations, as the Presbyterians, the Independents and the Baptists, called themselves collectively ; . . and these were more engaged in controversy among themselves than with the Establishment. The Baptists split into two bodies, calling themselves General and Particular, that is to say, the one allowed of latitudinarian, the other professed Calvinistic

opinions. The Presbyterians, whose sect had been the most numerous, lapsed into Arianism first, then into Socinianism, till few of the original description were left. The Independents underwent no change; and all, in the natural course of things, gave more proselytes to the Church than they drew from it.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You have spoken of that period as, on the whole, the happiest in English history, having been least disquieted by political and religious troubles.

MONTESINOS.

But, as I then observed, it was a time of great degeneracy in very many important points. The manners of high life were not indeed so absolutely profligate as in the infamous days of Charles II., but there was a greater degree of general coarseness. Drunkenness had become as much a national vice among the gentry, as it was among the Germans. The learning which the universities imparted was still sound and orthodox, ..but there was little of it; and, considering them as schools of morals, the course of life there was better adapted to graduate young men in the brutalizing habits of the society wherewith they were soon to mingle, than to qualify them for reforming it. The

Church, therefore, was ill supplied with ministers ; its higher preferments were bestowed with more reference to political connexions than to individual desert: and there never was less religious feeling, either within the Establishment or without, than when Wesley blew his trumpet and awakened those who slept. His followers soon divided upon the old question of fatalism ; .. a considerable number of the Calvinistic branch, having no leader after Whitefield's death, and no such constitution to keep them together as Wesley had framed for the subjects of his spiritual dominion, joined one or other body of the old Dissenters, and most frequently the Independents, to whom they brought a great accession of zeal and strength. Methodism, even under Wesley, had weaned them from the Church, and Whitefield had always been more in sympathy with the Puritans, than with the Establishment in which he was ordained. The orthodox Dissenters were thus recruited, not by any exertions of their own, but by gathering in those whom the Methodists had drawn away from the Church, and had not been able to retain. And in this manner they are continually recruited at this time.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But when converts were made in populous parts of the land, such as large towns and manufacturing districts, where the greater number must always be found, they would be, not members won over from the Church, but sheep whom the pastors had never folded,.. stragglers gathered in from the waste: the overflow of the people, for whose increase no moral and religious provision had been made by a supine and timid hierarchy and a reckless government.

MONTESINOS.

Persons of that description, and they are still, to the reproach of government, very numerous, are of the lowest class; and that class continues with the Methodists, for a cause which I will presently explain. The Dissenters obtained in this manner members of a different description, raised among the middle order of tradesmen, and the lower order of those who live, as it is called, upon their own means. These, when the pulse of their enthusiasm had fallen, became disgusted with the extravagancies of the society which they had joined, and not less justly impatient of its inquisitive discipline: and if a serious sense of religion survived the fever which had spent itself, they

chose rather to pass over to the Dissenters than return to the Church which they had forsaken ; partly to escape the reproach of unsteadiness and inconsistency ; partly because a serious tone of manners, the remains of the puritanical character, was preserved among the sectarians ; and partly, also, from a clear view of their own worldly interest, . . a sort of clear-sightedness, which, if it be frequently opposed to the spirit of religion, is always compatible* with the profession of it.

* “ That godliness is gain, we all confess ;
 By the same rule, then, gain is godliness.
 This weighty truth our holy tradesmen know,
 As hand in hand their zeal and interest go.
 Well skill'd the follies of the day to seize,
 How pious they, while piety can please !
 A saintly grocer here exclaims aloud,
 ‘ Abstain from Afric’s blood, ye careless crowd !
 Lo, judgement comes ! terrific thunders roll !
 Oh, here preserve your sweetmeats and your soul !’
 There serious footmen advertise for place,
 Full six feet high, and thriving babes of grace.
 See sacred toys the tempting panes expose,
 Christ’s cross and ladder, Sharon’s heavenly rose ;
 Good milliners proclaim the scarf of faith,
 Magdalen hoods, and veils of Nazareth ;
 Psalms and a vein religious surgeons breathe,
 And ease at once your scruples and your teeth.”

The Reigning Vice, p. 112.

I transcribe, also, an explanatory note from this clever little

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And which is generally found to be warmly and comfortably covered with that cloak.

MONTESINOS.

The fact is curious in the history of trade, and little known, that the practice of travelling about the country to solicit orders for goods, began among the Quakers, as an incidental consequence of the life led by their Errant-Preachers. Indeed, no sooner had nonconformity ceased to be attended with any kind of danger or inconvenience to its professors, than certain advantages were found to result from it. Its members retained their full share of the general benefits of that general society from which they had withdrawn, for the purpose of forming within it a society of their own: for the exclusions which are imposed by the Test Act, affected only an individual here and there, and the benefits of their own association were wholly to themselves. Thus, in all their dealings, a preference is given to persons of their own sect;

volume. “ There was a little pasteboard toy, called the ladder of matrimony, which used to stand among the gay cento of a drawing-room table. It has been superseded, in pious families, by a trifle of similar construction, every step of which marks our mortal progress heavenward on the one side, and hellward on the other.”

whereas the great body of their countrymen, acting upon no such principle, never dream of inquiring into the tenets of those with whom they deal as tradesmen, or whom they employ in other ways. The Dissenter, when he travels about the country, carries with him in his profession of dissent a passport, which is not less useful than Freemasonry is said to be to an Englishman in some parts of the continent. Moreover, they keep themselves, as a body, clear of scandalous or troublesome members, ridding themselves without difficulty of any who prove to be such, by turning them out upon general society.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

In this respect they exercise among themselves the sort of wholesome polity which formed a part of the Saxon law, and in which your existing institutions are most defective.

MONTESINOS.

These are solid advantages: and, within their own sphere, they enjoy individually a greater degree of importance than would fall to their share if they belonged to a wider circle. The various offices in which the members are engaged relative to the concerns of the meeting, give them respectability in the eyes of that little public of which they form a part;

and, without any such reasons to render him respectable, a man may figure as the Diotrophes of a Meeting, who would have a very different sense of his own dignity if he belonged to the Church. Much worldly wisdom, too, is shown in the organization and management of these bodies, in which the art of guiding and governing men with their own consent has been brought to great perfection. Activity is employed, ..zeal has work assigned for it. There is a stir of business among them, ..a perpetual bustle of confederacy. Societies and Branch Societies, Associations, Deputations, Committees, District Meetings, Quarterly and Annual Meetings, Preachers from a distance, Speechifications,* Ladies' Associations, Ladies' Committees, . . † so that the spirit never is

* There may be too much of these good things, it seems. A writer in the *Evangelist Magazine*, (May, 1826, pp. 185-6,) who says, that ninety-nine out of an hundred "attend the annual meetings of the Societies principally for the purpose of legitimate excitement," complains that "unquestionably, as a matter of fact, a speech of half an hour, or three quarters, is a great affliction, when ten or twelve such addresses are to be listened to," and recommends, "for both physical and moral causes, that no public religious meeting should be protracted beyond the limit of three hours, or three hours and a half at farthest."

† The *Evangelical Magazine* for the present month (July,

allowed to sink or slumber for want of excitement. Now, too, every Sect, and every Sub-Sect has its magazine, with portraits (in many of them) of their ministers while they are living, memoirs of them after their death, and an obituary of the lay members, in the manner of the *Flos Sanctorum*. There is a great deal in all this that is not religion, but it tends to promote the cause of sectarianism. Enthusiasm has “ample room and verge enough” allowed it. Pride finds its incense there, and Vanity its food.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The Romish Church provides this sort of occupation and amusement for the laity, in fraternities and processions and festivals.

1827) contains, on its covers, (p. 24,) an excellent advertisement, which may most fitly be presented to the reader in this place.

“A Public Religious Tea and Coffee Party will take place on Tuesday, the 24th of July, 1827, at the Eyre Tavern, near Lisson Grove, Regent’s Park, at five o’clock, in aid of the Funds, and with the consent of the Committee of the Aged Pilgrim’s Friend Society, when the kind attendance of the ministers and friends thereto is most respectfully invited. The Rev. Mr. Leach, of Robert-Street Chapel, will preside. Tickets, Two Shillings each, of Mr. Green, 5, Duke-Street, Manchester-Square; Mr. Carman, 114, Newgate-Street, and Mr. Sparks, 2, Southampton-Street, Strand. After tea select pieces will be sung. The Room will Tea six hundred persons. Carriage-road to the door. No Collection made.”

MONTESINOS.

These attractions, which the old Dissenting Sects hold out to the class of which they are almost exclusively composed, Methodism provides for the lower class; and therefore the converts of that description remain in its ranks, unless they become reprobates; or, if they change, it is only to pass from one of its denominations to another. For Methodism is now old enough to have its schisms as well as its offsets.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Like the Monastic Orders, which were continually subdividing upon some quarrel of reform, .. for the restoration of old observances, or the introduction of new; sometimes for things as nugacious as the colour of a habit, or the shape of a cowl.

MONTESINOS.

The cause of those divisions has uniformly been the same. All the orders were instituted by persons in a high degree of enthusiasm, who thought they never could impose too many privations and discomforts upon themselves and their followers. Their successors naturally endeavoured to relax the rule by which they were bound, and accommodate it as far as possible to their own convenience and ease. But

no sooner had they succeeded in this, than some reformer* arose among them, and revived the old spirit with more or less success, under a new association. The divisions among our sectaries, in like manner, originate, for the most part, in the same† sort of temper which gave birth to the sect. In the other bodies it seldom goes farther than to divide a meeting, and this can be done only in places where the sect is numerous and wealthy; but, among the Methodists, its operation has checked the growth of the original society, and may very probably prevent its farther increase. One

* The Jesuits are the only order in which this struggle between superstition and the spirit of the world has not continually been going on. Among them it has never appeared, because, in forming their constitution, fanaticism was directed by politic heads, as it has ever been in the administration of that insidious society.

† “ Even in doctrines heretical, there will be super-heresies, and Arians not only divided from the Church, but also among themselves: for heads that are disposed unto schism, and complexionally propense to innovation, are naturally disposed for a community, nor will be ever confined unto the order or œconomy of one body, and therefore, when they separate from others, they knit but loosely among themselves; nor contented with a general breach or dichotomy with their Church, do subdivide and mince themselves almost into atoms.”—*Religio Medici*.

division was caused by the desire of wresting the government from the hands of a self-elected body of preachers, and giving to lay members a part in it; failing in this attempted change, the promoters set up a new connexion; but its progress has been slow, owing partly to the early death of the leader of the schism, partly to the defection of the ablest man among them, (a person of great ability,) who went over to the old society; but principally to the grounds of the separation, because they related merely to the management of the body, a question which might raise some temporary interest, but could not support any continuous feeling. The leader of the Ranters started in a more popular cause. Having prevailed upon some colliers, in his own phrase, “fully to set out for heaven,” one of them promised his associates a whole day’s praying in the open air, and this led to an imitation of the American Camp-Meetings. The Methodist Conference pronounced such meetings to be highly improper in England, whatever they might be in America, condemned them as being productive of considerable mischief, and disclaimed all connexion with the enthusiasts who directed them. They of course then erected their own standard, and their success has been rapid and great: they attract the

greater part of those converts who would otherwise join the old society : and as Wesley himself broke loose from the discipline of the Church in which he was ordained, in like manner others, who are in a state of mind similar to that in which he began his memorable career, rebel against the restrictions of established Methodism, and join the more enthusiastic party. Another branch distinguishes itself by the singularity of preaching in tents ; another by employing female preachers.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Is there no negligence in the shepherds, when so many sheep are to be found astray ?

MONTESINOS.

The fault is less imputable there than to the government, which, during more than a century from the time of the Revolution, may be said to have entirely disregarded the state of religion. No provision was made for increasing the means of religious instruction in proportion to the increase of population, nor was any attention paid to the sort of increase which the manufacturing system produces. The Church, even when preferment was bestowed with least regard to desert, and most to personal or political considerations, has never been without its burning and shining lights. It has produced

the ablest vindications of natural and revealed religion against those worst enemies of their fellow-kind who have laboured to set aside the evidence for both, ..and of its own primitive faith against its Romish opponents. And though we still sometimes hear of such promotions as are likened* to snow in summer and rain in harvest for their effect upon the public weal, at no time has the Church of England been better supplied with dutiful and able ministers than it is now, if, indeed, at any time so well.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Better supplied than at any former time it may be, and yet be supplied but ill. State patronage and lay patronage must always insure in some degree that evil, till statesmen have sufficient integrity, and government sufficient strength, to regard desert alone in the disposal of preferment; and till it be generally understood that the person who presents himself for ordination, or is presented for a benefice, will certainly be rejected, should he be found incompetent, in the first case, or unworthy in the second. “Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.” But to suppose that this should uni-

* Proverbs, xxvi. 1.

formly and strictly be done, would be supposing a greater improvement in the common feelings and practice of society than is likely soon to be effected in a nation where so many causes of corruption are at work.

MONTESINOS.

And yet a great improvement has been effected within the present generation, in episcopal superintendence, in the disposal of the government patronage, and in the discipline of the universities. It began in the universities, where it was most needed. An increase of the clergy, proportionate to the increase of the people, is still wanting. But the first steps have been taken towards this necessary measure; and something has also been done towards training up a supply of clergy for those remoter parts of the country where the cures are miserably poor, and the peasantry are the only inhabitants. Such cures were held in these northern counties by unordained persons till about the middle of George II.'s reign, when the Bishops came to a resolution, that no one should officiate who was not in orders. But, because there would have been some injustice and some hardship in ejecting the existing incumbents, they were admitted to deacons' orders without undergoing any examination.

The person who was then Reader, as it was called, at yonder Chapel, in the Vale of Newlands, and who received this kind of ordination, exercised the various trades of Taylor, Clogger, and Butter-print maker.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Such places were better supplied, methinks, when the Convents sent forth itinerant preachers through the country.

MONTESINOS.

Poor and retired cures, however, are not better supplied with resident ministers in Romish countries at this time. In Scotland young clergymen are stationed upon such cures, with the title of Missionaries, and promoted to benefices elsewhere after some years of probationary service. This arrangement is found, I believe, to answer well in practice: perhaps it might not be equally practicable in England, where a smaller proportion of ecclesiastics is now drawn from humble life, ..which in former times supplied the far greater part of the active, ..or, in the phraseology of the present day, the operative clergy.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Some of the highest preferment in the Church was always bestowed upon persons of high birth, under the old system, though they had

little other pretensions to it than what their parentage gave them. There were also not a few who belonged to what may be called the Church dormant; for these the Monastic establishments provided convenient dormitories and ample endowments. Persons of the former class have still the means of securing their full share in the distribution of state patronage, which, however, cannot now be bestowed without some regard to appearances, and some deference to public opinion. Persons of the latter description are thrust into the Church by lay patronage; more excusably, perhaps, when a fair allowance is made for natural feelings and family claims, but more injuriously to the commonweal; because such appointments are not within the scope of general observation, and therefore the same regard to qualifications and character is not exacted. Neither the Church nor State have been better served since this class of men, which was formerly disposed of in comfortable abbies, has been provided for in the ranks of diplomacy, and in public offices, or as parish priests. You tell me, however, that in the Church some check has been placed upon the admission of those whose idle habits, or narrow capacities, disqualify them for even the ordinary business of their profession. So

far as this restraint may exist, even if it proceed only from a politic perception, that, assailed as the Church Establishment now is on all sides, its preservation must mainly depend upon the worth and efficiency of its members, it tends to produce a better principle in this important matter, and a better practice, than has heretofore been manifested; and this may be regarded as a symptom of the best kind of improvement, that which takes place in public opinion. I should have supposed that it would have been more difficult to bring about this improvement, than to find ministers who would be contented to serve the Church in its humblest and poorest stations. In a country which sends forth its missionaries to all parts of the globe, and which is actually overflowing with enthusiasm, if the Established Church feel a want of unambitious, unworldly, devout and devoted men, to engage in its most forlorn service, or perform its most laborious and painful duties, it cannot surely be because such persons are not to be found. The land abounds with them; the very zeal which overruns it like a noxious weed might be rendered wholesome by proper culture, and bring forth good fruit. There must be some defect in ecclesiastical polity where such a want is felt.

MONTESINOS.

There is that defect : no channel has been opened for enthusiasm, . . . using the word in that better sense which it may sometimes bear. The useful ends to which lay zeal might be directed were not perceived in the first age of our Reformation ; and indeed, if the same kind of zeal had then existed, and in the same degree, there were no such opportunities for employing it, as the changes, I had almost said the revolutions, of society, have produced. Therefore, no want of foresight can be imputed to the founders of the English Church ; neither are their successors deserving of censure on this score, so long as those great struggles continued which agitated the nation for half a century after its convulsions had ceased. But we may indeed look back upon a whole hundred years subsequent to that time, during which not one of the sure and certain developements produced by progressive civilization seems to have been anticipated by statesmen ; no measure which indicates prospective policy was taken ; nor was the slightest attempt made toward supplying the defects and remedying the evils that exist in our social order, defects and evils which, in every generation, became more apparent and

more dangerous. Thus while the husbandman slept, the enemy improved the opportunity and sowed his tares; and the weeds of the soil blossomed and shed their seed.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

“ I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding ;

And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.”

MONTESINOS.

Solomon may seem indeed in that picture to have emblemed the state of our Church Establishment during the eighteenth century.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The thorns and the nettles, Montesinos, are still there, flourishing in their strength ; the fence which has been broken down is not repaired ; and there are still, methinks, among the husbandmen some whose desire is “ yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep !”

MONTESINOS.

Something of this must always be expected, and allowed for. Both in public and in private life there will ever be those who, for moral cowardice, seek to put off the evil which they are afraid to face, satisfied if the act of exertion,

or the day of reckoning can be deferred till their time is over, and reckless of what may happen afterwards. But this grievous sin of omission, in its worst degree, when it arises from mere, unqualified, self-acknowledged selfishness, is more likely to occur in domestic than in national affairs. Some excuse may be found for prelates and statesmen in that love of ease, or, to convey a more favourable, and perhaps a more accurate meaning, that desire of tranquillity, which age brings with it in the course of nature. Nor ought we hastily to condemn them for preferring that expectant system which is generally pursued by the physicians on the continent, and leaving political diseases, whether civil or ecclesiastical, to work out their own cure, or to exhaust themselves, instead of interfering with strong prescriptions, which might possibly prove hurtful rather than remedial. I offer this apology for them under a consciousness that, had I been placed in their station, I should have stood in need of such an excuse myself. That danger itself is the best remedy for danger, is a maxim which has been entered among the *Jacula* Prudentium*: but I

* Collected by George Herbert, and printed with his Remains.

can well understand, and, were I in their place, might probably partake the feeling of those in authority, who, in the clear foresight of impending evils, wrap themselves for consolation in the thought, that, “let the world go how it will, we shall have our length and our breadth at last.”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Then are you bound with deeper gratitude to thank Providence that it has not called you to a state of life in which a heavy responsibility is incurred by timidity and indecision! Interference may often be dangerous, but it is certain also that neglect, not unfrequently, is fatal. They whose aim, . . . and it is the wise and proper aim of statesmen in well ordered communities, . . . is to keep things as they are, should bear in mind, that such conservation can only be effected by constant vigilance and care; . . . that human affairs never remain stationary, but are always taking their course.

MONTESINOS.

Must we say with Shakspeare,

whose course will on,

The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs
Of more strong link asunder, than can ever
Appear in our impediment!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Men are but all too prone to find in that reflection an excuse to themselves for their own ineptitude or inertness. The truth is indubitable when applied to human affairs upon the great scale, as directed by omnipotent and omniscient Providence; for upon that scale they are no more within the scope of human controul than are the motions of the planets or the spheres. But this awful, though consolatory contemplation, is for faith and hope: they who gird themselves for the business of the world, should go to it with a sense of the utility, the importance, the necessity, and the duty of their exertions.

MONTESINOS.

Our present evils arise more from the excess of that confidence in green heads, than from the want of it in grey ones. Yet, on the whole, the too much and the too little, . . foresight and improvidence, caution and hope, wariness and enterprize, . . yea, even superstition and impiety, serve in their results to balance each other.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Has then the balance been adjusted in those results which the recklessness of the State, and the supineness of the Church, during the last

century, produced, or rather suffered to be produced, upon the moral and religious condition of this people?

MONTESINOS.

I mean to say that Providence has taken more care of an ungrateful nation, than that nation has taken for itself; and that a due sense of this awful truth ought to have the effect of keeping us watchful, not of lulling us into supine security. Seeing through what perils we have past, and in what position we now are, our rulers, methinks, should feel like a countryman, who, having fallen asleep in his cart, finds himself when he awakes upon the edge of a precipice, towards which the wheels are approaching.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Two manifestations of the course of Providence have often been pointed out as the most distinct and prominent which have yet occurred in the history of the human race. The coming of our Lord and Saviour is one, at that precise time when the world, in its moral and political circumstances, was best fitted for the reception and diffusion of the Gospel; the other, far indeed inferior in moment to that paramount event, but inferior to it alone, is the discovery of printing, just when the Gospel itself was to

be raised as it were from the dead. Looking at the present crisis of the world, have you not perceived that in like manner certain mighty agencies, hitherto unknown or unapplied, have been now first brought into action, when the necessity for their developement becomes apparent?

MONTESINOS.

Such a train of reflexions, and the belief which it confirms, could alone prevent me from regarding as sure forebodings the mournful thoughts that a clear perception of the present evils of society, and of those which are pressing upon it in dreadful sequence, too frequently, and too naturally, call forth. We were led to observe, in discoursing upon the changes which the Art of War has undergone, that, though the application of gunpowder to that art was foreseen and expected by Roger Bacon, it was not brought into full employ, even after its composition and its uses were generally known, till the time had come when its introduction tended to diminish rather than to aggravate the horrors of a state of warfare. This observation alone, were there no other ground for such a tenet, might lead us to infer, that the power of steam has not been called into action, and placed under human controul, till society had reached

that stage in its progress wherein more good than evil would result from the discovery. It is worthy of especial remark, and more especial gratitude, that if steam ships had been rendered manageable only ten years earlier, ..nay, even a less time, ..our deadly struggle with Buonaparte must have been decided upon our own soil; and in that case London might easily have shared the same fate as Moscow, though the invaders would assuredly have suffered as dreadful a catastrophe in this island from the arm of man, as was inflicted upon them in their flight from Russia by the ministering elements. Obvious as the application of steam to such a purpose may seem to have been, and common as it already has become in these few intervening years, the discovery was withheld till it could no longer be made instrumental to so great an evil; no sooner had that danger been averted than it came into use, rendering the great rivers of South America accessible to commerce and civilization just as the political revolution is effected there, which, ..whatever may be its other consequences, ..has opened those countries to the improvements which thus, and only thus, can be brought about. When I look to moral agencies, equally influential, but in a wider and more important sphere, I recog-

nize and admire the same merciful adaptation of means to their intended effect. In the social, as in the human system, new powers are called into action as they are needed, .. new functions develop themselves according to its growth. Schemes for general education are extensively promoted, and means for facilitating it, beyond all former example, have been devised in this age, when the rapid increase of the labouring classes renders education, as a corrective and conservative, not merely desirable for the well-being of society, but absolutely needful for the existence of our institutions and of social order itself, which otherwise would, ere long, inevitably be destroyed. Thus, too, when Popery is spreading itself over the face of the land, for so its advocates and propagandists boastingly proclaim; when, in their own words,* it is “ taking its hereditary attitude,” which is, being inter-

* I take them from a Stonyhurst publication, entitled “ Protestantism calmly considered,” as quoted in a newspaper. The Jesuits of that establishment there tell us, that their religion “ is again spreading itself over the face of the land ; it has been kept down by a series of intolerant laws, and almost extinguished by the *bloody persecutions of Protestant kings* ; but it is again *taking its hereditary attitude*, supported by Him who promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it.”

preted, advancing its old claims, and struggling to recover its old ascendancy and dominion ; a zeal for the Scriptures, such as no former times have witnessed, hath arisen ; and the same feeling, by which our fathers were delivered from the tyranny and more intolerable impositions of the Romish Church, is manifesting itself anew to uphold the religious freedom which we have inherited, and to extend the privileges and the blessings of that freedom unto the people who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. In one of our first conversations,* Sir Thomas, you gave that zeal the name of bibliolatry ; I admit that to such an excess it may in some instances have been carried : I admit that weakness, rashness, enthusiasm, fanaticism, have been brought by it into action and into full display : that Zanies and Pharisees have played their part in the exhibition, and that Simplicity and Truth may have been seen there arm-in-arm with Hypocrisy and Craft. But in all great movements there has ever been this mixture of men and motives ; and with all drawbacks for this, all allowances for misdirected and wasted exertions, certain it is that there has been a great and good object in view,

* Vol. i. p. 39.

and that a mighty and a holy work is in progress.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The Church of England, Montesinos, has yet to learn one lesson from its enemies, . . . how to marshal and direct that enthusiasm, which no system, however wise or however despotic, can suppress, and which, if it be not enlisted in its service, is sure to be actively engaged against it.

MONTESINOS.

The art of directing enthusiasm into channels where it may either be usefully employed, or spend itself harmlessly, is the most difficult which the Machiavellists of Papal Rome have ever been called upon to practise.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Yet they succeeded in it.

MONTESINOS.

Only to a certain extent: for what is the history of all the heresies in the Romish Church, the schisms that have shaken, and the opinions which at this day, notwithstanding its vainly boasted unity, divide it, but the register of their failures? And when they succeeded, methinks the sincere Romanist, who has not proscribed to himself all use of reason, must wish in his secret heart that the Romish Church had

rather dispensed with the temporary service, however great, of knaves and fools and madmen, than have taken to itself the load of infamy which has thus been brought upon it. Mad as James Nailor was, and blasphemous as was the character of his madness, I cannot read of his punishment without feeling something like the shame and sorrow that we partake in a national disgrace. Yet how much better is it, even for the national credit, (all consequences apart,) that this poor fanatic should have suffered the sentence which makes him an object of compassion whenever his name is remembered, (even to those by whom his most edifying repentance is unknown,) than that he should have been, as others under a like delusion were, exhibited with the *stigmata*, .. that advantage should have been taken of his insanity to render him the accomplice or the victim of an impious conspiracy, .. and that after his death he should have been canonized for a new object of idolatrous worship!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But, without passing the bounds of strictest probity and prudence, do you not think that the rulers of the Church might have sanctioned Wesley and Whitefield in their extraordinary ministry, and that the Methodists might thus

have been retained within the pale of the Establishment?

MONTESINOS.

No fear of misrepresentation, or of obloquy, shall ever deter me from declaring my belief that Wesley and Whitefield were chosen instruments of Providence, for giving a great impulse to religious feeling when it was needed most. But I do not think that the Bishops could conscientiously, or prudently, have sanctioned their proceedings at any stage of their career, . . . certainly not at first, when they gave way to and encouraged extravagances, which Wesley, after age and experience had sobered him, heartily condemned. A re-union with the Methodists since his death may seem to have been much more practicable than a comprehension of the Dissenters ever was; but there is a remark of Lord Strafford's to be borne in mind, who warns us, "how advised we ought to be of any innovation, considering that inconveniences are rather found by experience, than foreseen by judgement." Yet, bearing the warning of this great statesman in mind, I am nevertheless of opinion, that it is possible at this time, not indeed to bring the Methodists back to the Establishment from which they have erred and strayed, but to employ Methodism in aid of the

Establishment, and embody as Church-Methodists those who would otherwise be drawn in to join one or other of the numerous squadrons of dissent.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

In this way, if I apprehend your meaning, they might be to the Church of England what its various fraternities are to the Church of Rome.

MONTESINOS.

The good that is connected with those fraternities might be attained, free from the superstitious and idolatrous practices upon which they are, for the most part, founded. There would be that segregation from the community into particular societies which gratifies at once the social and the selfish feeling, and which is one of the strong attractions that Sectarianism holds out. There would be that employment afforded for which certain dispositions are continually craving, .. that sympathy for devotional tempers which it is so dangerous to inflame, and yet so injurious to extinguish. But, what is more pertinent to our immediate topic, volunteers would thus be found to take upon themselves some of those duties which, in large towns and thickly-peopled districts, it is impossible for the parochial clergy to perform.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Could the difficulty which you have noticed, of providing fit ministers for poor and lonely places, be thus removed ?

MONTESINOS.

That object can be effected no otherwise than by raising the income of the poorest benefice till it is sufficient to render the incumbent respectable, as to worldly circumstances, in the eyes of his parishioners.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Is it likely that such a description of Methodists could be raised ; and, if raised, is it probable that they could be kept together, and restrained from extravagances such as those into which you have truly observed both Whitefield and the Wesleys fell ?

MONTESINOS.

There are at this time men willing to make the attempt, and qualified for what they would undertake. They propose, not to take upon themselves any of the ministerial functions, not to consider their body as an independent sect, nor their preachers as independent ministers ; but to act simply as a religious society, united in dutiful obedience to the Establishment, professing its tenets, and endeavouring to promote, by precept and example, the knowledge and

practice of true Christian piety. To secure the continuance of that union with the National Church, which is the principle of their association, they agree to insert a provision in the title deeds of every Chapel, that if the sacrament should ever be administered there, or the Chapel opened for worship in canonical hours, when there is service in the parish Church, the Chapel should thereby be escheated, and become the property of the Crown. Thus, they say, they should act in conformity with the principles which Wesley professed first and last; thus should they obey the counsels which Wesley gave in the last year of his life, when, repeating his declaration, that he lived and died a member of the Church of England, he added, “that none, who regarded his judgement or advice, would ever separate from it; and thus, should they fulfil his prediction, that whenever his followers should divide into Dissenting-Methodists and Church-Methodists, the latter would carry on his primitive design with more success than ever; the former,” he said, “would dwindle into a dry, dull, separate sect.” There is, therefore, good reason to suppose that a body of Church-Methodists might be raised, and that, if raised, they might be kept together. Whether it would be possible to guard effectually

against those extravagances, into which weak minds and strong feelings are easily hurried, is a question to be more doubtfully answered. Love-feasts, which give occasion for scandal, and watch-nights, which afford opportunity for what is scandalous, would, the first probably, the last certainly, be disused ; and so must the abominable practice of mutual examination and confession in the band-meetings.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

What do they ask from the National Church, in furtherance of their design ?

MONTESINOS.

Countenance from its dignitaries ; and to have their services accepted by the parochial clergy, as they are offered, in good will.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Will they obtain this ?

MONTESINOS.

There are many obstacles, and of a kind which are not easily removed ; strong prejudices in some, amounting to a settled dislike ; timidity in others, who would be willing to see the attempt made, and glad that it should succeed, but who shrink from the responsibility of affording it any direct encouragement. Many will be of opinion that nothing, with the name and semblance of Methodism, can be propagated,

without leading to some such follies and excesses as have generally accompanied it. Many, again, may apprehend, that more formalism than faith would be produced, a pharisaic* demeanour, and an uncharitable spirit, rather than a Christian temper. And many, who have not these fears, may be withheld from giving any approbation to such an attempt, by their persuasion that our Church has provided all that is necessary for the instruction, the exercise, and the consolation of its members; and therefore they are contented, according to the old monk's rule, *sinere res vadere sicut evadunt*.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There may, indeed, seem reason for apprehending that the new wheat which the husbandmen, whom you are for admitting into the field, would sow, would be in the proportion of a few grains to a handful of tares; at any rate, the field would stand in need of constant and careful weeding! But they who suppose that the ecclesiastical Establishment, in its present state, is competent to the duties expected from it, must have overlooked the great increase of

* "For ought I see," says South, "though the Mosaical part of Judaism be abolished among Christians, the Pharisaical part of it never will."—Vol. i. p. 65.

population, for which no provision has been made, and the fearful changes of society, which, even more than that increase, render the corrective and conservative powers of religion above all things necessary. For that, and that alone, can preserve the social body from putrescence and dissolution.

COLLOQUY XI.

INFIDELITY.—CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.


MONTESINOS.

YOUR last words, Sir Thomas, have left a weight upon my mind. Nothing but religion, you said, can preserve our social system from putrescence and dissolution. This I entirely believe; and therefore a melancholy and fearful apprehension comes over me when I contemplate the present state of the Christian world. Throughout Papal Christendom there has been substituted for Christianity a mass of corruptions which nauseates the understanding, and at which the reasonable heart revolts. And in reformed countries I see the Church abroad, for the most part, starved by the government, and betrayed by the clergy; and, at home, assailed by greater danger than has at any time threatened it since the accession of Elizabeth, when this nation was delivered from bondage. In comparing the age of Luther with the present times, this great difference is to be ob-

served, that Infidelity, which was rife enough during the former period, kept safely then under the wing of the Romish Church, and exerted itself to uphold the system of imposture with which it had coalesced, and by which it flourished. It is strong enough now to claim supremacy, and to struggle for it. At that time it consisted simply in the disbelief of religion; it now implies the hatred of it; and, while it is vehemently engaged against Popery on the continent, acts in alliance with Popery, with equal vehemence, against the ecclesiastical Establishment here.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The difference is worthy of consideration, and its causes are easily to be traced. All men of learning in those days were, with very few exceptions, either monks or clergy; and they were not so many but that the Church and the Monasteries could provide for all. You have a numerous and rapidly increasing class of literary men, and a still more numerous one of persons, who take their opinions from them with as implicit a faith, and as much prostration of intellect, as the simplest peasant exhibits to the wildest priest. That a little learning is dangerous, is true enough to have past into a proverb; it is not less true that a very little suffices

for the stock in trade, upon which the scribes and scriveners of literature, who take upon themselves to direct the public, set up. Better education, humbler minds, sounder intellects, happier dispositions, nay, even a more fortunate position in society, might have enabled them to perceive the truth of religion, and to understand its paramount importance to the human race, to the community of which they form a part, and to their own happiness, temporal as well as eternal.

MONTESINOS.

Of too many of them, indeed, may it be said, that *ne* dubitare quidem sciunt, quibus omnia contemnere ac nescire satis est.*

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Ignorance upon that subject is not to be admitted as an excuse,† or palliation, for those who have had the means and the opportunity of knowledge.

* D. Heinsius, in the letter in which he gives an account of Scaliger's death.

† "As far as ignorance itself is excusable," says Dean Sherlock, "so far ignorance will excuse. But commonly ignorance itself is a great crime; and, when it is so, if men shall not be judged for the sins which they ignorantly commit, yet they shall be judged and condemned for their ignorance, as well as for their sins against knowledge."—*On Judgement*, p. 307.

MONTESINOS.

Lawyers have laid down that maxim without any qualification. But the ways of God are more merciful than those of man. He who falls into the water has the natural means for saving his life; but, if he has never been taught to exercise his limbs in swimming, he sinks and perishes. Surely this is his misfortune, not his crime.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

In what manner is this illustration intended to serve?

MONTESINOS.

I would apply it to show, that there are circumstances which may be admitted in palliation or excuse for neglecting the means and opportunities of knowledge.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

We are speaking of that knowledge whereby men are rendered wise unto salvation. Let not the evil heart of unbelief tempt you to presume that the means of this knowledge can be neglected with impunity! The condition of men in this world, however wisely and virtuously they may act, must depend, in no slight degree, upon the conduct of others, upon circumstances, and the chances of society. But their condition in a future state, their everlasting welfare

depends wholly on themselves ; no chances, no circumstances, no misconduct on the part of others can deprive them of eternal happiness, if they are true to themselves, and reject not the proffered means of salvation.

MONTESINOS.

Alas, that it should be so difficult for them to believe* and love ! I know not which should be regarded as the worst enemies of their fellow creatures, they who mislead and abuse our faith, or they who labour with pestilent activity to destroy it. Yet, perhaps, more evil is brought about by indirect causes than by immediate ones ; and the ways of the world have greater influence than the efforts of fanaticism and false philosophy, in producing superstition and misbelief on one hand, and unbelief on the other. The religious culture of the mind is neglected in youth, when its intellectual advancement in other respects receives most attention ; and no sooner have we attained to manhood, than we are devoted to some branch

* “ Let this meditation,” says Jackson, “ never slip out of thy memory ; that seeing the last and principal end of all graces bestowed upon us in this life, is rightly to believe in Christ, this cannot be, as the drowsy worldling dreams, the easiest, but rather the most difficult point of Christianity.”—Vol. i. p. 780.

or other of "that cold business," in which, as Ben Jonson says, "a man mispends the better part of life." Care then cankers the heart, or prosperity corrupts it; the fever of ambition seizes us, or we fall into the *morbus fatuus* of the worldly wise; and practical irreligion is thus produced even in those who escape the malaria of infidelity.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Religious education, you say, is neglected. Where does that sin of omission rest, . . . with the people, or with the clergy? Is it a defect in the institutions, or a fault in the customs of the country?

MONTESINOS.

All have their share in it, ill customs, defective institutions, . . . the clergy, who neglect their duty in this particular, . . . and the parents, who leave undone what it is in their power to do. To them, however, the least part of the omission is imputable; few mothers failing to instruct their children as far as their own capabilities of instructing extend. But it is one of the evils of our schools, public and private, that the habits of devotion which a boy learns at his mother's knees are broken there, and the seeds of early piety destroyed.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

It has come to pass, then, in the changes of society, that the very institutions, which in their origin were purely religious seminaries, are now the places where religion may, in a certain sense, be said to be unlearned !

MONTESINOS.

To keep up so much of the practice of piety, as is essential for the life and reality of religion, there must be social worship, and solitary prayer. For the latter there is no opportunity at school, however much the boy himself may desire to observe a custom, the importance of which he has duly been taught to apprehend. But it is impossible for him to do this in a common dormitory, or even when other boys are lodged in the same chamber. Few parents seem to be sensible of this evil, though it may prove more deeply injurious in its consequences than any other mischief which may be deemed incidental to public education.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The use of dormitories was continued from the old establishments ; but the perpetual superintendence, which made a part of the conventual system, was withdrawn. The evil is to be remedied by allotting to each his sepa-

rate chamber, and introducing just so much superintendence as may secure its privacy.

MONTESINOS.

There may be too much superintendence, as well as too little; but this remedy would go far towards putting an end to the tyranny exercised by the senior boys, which is the worst evil that the want of superintendence has produced. There would be more difficulty in making social worship retain, or rather resume, its proper character and uses; the effect at present, both at schools and universities, being to deaden the instinct of piety, instead of cherishing and maturing it. Here we have a difficulty which had no existence in days when monasteries were the only seminaries of learning.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The pupils in such establishments saw that the practice, or at least the profession, of religion, was the main business of life for those under whose tuition they were placed, or by whom they were surrounded. Moreover, it was the service in which they had enlisted, and to the higher grades of which they were looking on; by it they were to be elevated in society, and it was the only means of elevation for those who were not of noble birth; by it they were to obtain, at all events, security in an insecure

age, subsistence, respectability, ease and comfort : wealth and luxury were accessible to their desires ; if ambition inclined that way, the highest earthly dignities entered into their prospect ; if it took a loftier direction, the higher honours of altars and images might be reserved for them at last. Here, then, every thing tended to make them feel the temporal and spiritual importance of religion. If their minds were not impressed by the ceremonials of a splendid ritual, they were at least engaged in it ; there was something to occupy them, . . something for the eye, and the imagination. Should the heart remain unaffected, it was, nevertheless, entertained in a state which made it apt to receive devout impressions, and open to their influences. You threw away your crutches too soon, mistaking the excitement of that fervour, which the religious revolution called forth, for confirmed and healthy strength. Now, when the excitement has worn itself out, a stage of languor has succeeded, which has a dangerous tendency to terminate in torpor and indifference. But this is an unnatural state of mind, for man is a religious creature, and it is among those who seek to escape from it, that superstition finds an eager demand for its opiates, or enthusiasm for its cordial elixirs.

MONTESINOS.

I have smiled at seeing little angels on horse-back parading in honour of some Nossa Senhora of the thousand appellations. But these puppet-shows of Popery have their use.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And the puppets also ; or that part of Paganism would never have been taken into the ceremonials of a Priesthood which has possessed, in full perfection, the wisdom* of this world ! It is for a better wisdom to separate the helpful from the hurtful ; to reject whatever is inconsistent with pure and undefiled religion, and to retain all that may assist in winning the heart to its service.

MONTESINOS.

What the Romanists succeed in doing by the worship of Saints and Angels, and by their Marian religion, is effected by purer means in those parts of Europe where the Reformed Church still lays “ the strong hand of her purity”† upon her children. It is thus in Scotland, wherever manufactures and infidelity are

* A modern historian talks of “ that *ignorance* of mankind which Priests usually display !” As if any other class of men ever had, or could have, from the nature of their functions, half so much knowledge of human nature !

† Wordsworth.

not co-operating to corrupt the people. It is so in the better parts of Switzerland, where the clergy have not betrayed their trust. The youth of both sexes there, when they have arrived at years of discretion, receive a regular and careful course of religious education, for which the state provides: early tuition has prepared them for this, . . . and the effects of this intellectual confirmation are seen in their conduct through life. They are made to understand the grounds and foundation of their belief. They are trained up in the way that they should go, and their feet depart not from it.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Wherefore is it not so with you ?

MONTESINOS.

That it is not may be explained, but not excused, by observing, that crowded societies are less favourable to morals, and to piety, upon which morals must be established, than simpler and smaller communities; but they afford full opportunities for irreligion on one hand, and for the contagious influences of enthusiasm and bigotry on the other. There is the reason, also, that the State has made no provision for it; an express provision, such as at this time exists in Switzerland, was not needed formerly; and the instruction which Sunday-schools can

afford is discontinued at an earlier age than that at which the Swiss course of confirmation (as it may be called) begins. But even primary instruction is insufficiently supplied. The increase of population, while the Church Establishment has remained as the Reformation left it, renders it impossible for the clergyman to perform the business of a catechist, except in small parishes; and the course of domestic instruction is broken by the custom, long since general in the middle and higher classes, of sending boys to school. But no where is a boy in so ill a disposition to receive religious lessons as at school, and perhaps no where are lessons so ill taught. My old master, Dr. Vincent, endeavoured to repel this charge, as it affects public schools, when it was brought against them some five-and-twenty years ago by Dr. Rennell. He took up the argument with natural feeling, and becoming warmth, in defence of an establishment with which he had been so long and so honourably connected, and he wrote, as he always did, vigorously and well. But the case failed him; he could only show that books of catechetical instruction were used in the school, that Scriptural exercises made a part of the course, and that theological lectures were read to the King's scholars. So

far is well ; there is no fault of omission here, and what is done is performed as well as it there can be. It is true, also, that the school is always opened and prorogued with a short prayer, and that in the boarding houses prayers are read every night by the head boy of the house ; ..but performed as this is, and necessarily must be, it were better left undone. And Vincent did not reflect on the effect of compulsory attendance at divine service, at times when the service is merely perfunctory, and under circumstances which render attention to the duties of the place, at all times, impossible. Public worship is never presented in so unattractive, ..almost, I might say, in so irreligious a form, ..as it is to school boys. Now, though we are, as you have justly said, religious creatures, (and it is the noblest distinction of human nature that we are so,) youth is not the season of life in which the developement of our religious instinct naturally takes place ; in boyhood it must be awakened, and requires to be kept up by continual culture. Habitual irreverence soon deadens, even if it does not destroy it ; but habitual irreverence is what is learnt at school, and certainly not unlearnt at College. A distaste is thus acquired for public worship, ..not to say a dislike for it ; and young men,

when they become their own masters, cease to frequent church, because they have been so long compelled to attend its service in an unfit state of mind.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Such absentees are, probably, more easily made Dissenters, than they can be brought back to the fold which they have once forsaken.

MONTESINOS.

Men, who have received this higher education, seldom enter into the ranks of dissent; their connections in life are rarely such as would lead them towards the meeting-house. A few become Socinians; and perhaps there are more who pass from cold indifference to a feverish state of what may better be called religiosity, than religion, for little charity can be perceived in it, and less humility. Professional engagements bring back a greater number into the right way, and keep them there. Others are restored by the gentle and natural effects of time, or the sharper discipline of affliction, which teaches them where to find the only source of comfort, the only balm for a wounded heart, the only rest for an immortal spirit. But too many fall into habits of practical irreligion, and, according as there may be more or less of vanity and presumptuousness in their disposi-

tion, become the proselytes, or the propagandists of speculative impiety. Even while the Jews were living under a visible dispensation, and before the Glory had departed from the Temple, fools were to be found among them, who said in their heart, There is no God. Much more may this worst and deadliest infatuation be expected to show itself in these latter times, when so great a part of mankind live as if there were none, and when the ways of the world, its pursuits and its* pleasures, its follies, and...Heaven help us!.. its philosophies, have interposed an atmosphere of darkness palpable

* I would not, however, be understood, as if assenting to Paley's assertion, that "the world, even in its innocent pursuits and pleasures, has a tendency unfavourable to the religious sentiment." (Sermon I.) Surely this is not the case with its innocent pleasures, some of which directly induce devotional feelings. St. Pierre has a pretty story which is applicable here.

"Un jour, un de mes amis fut voir un Chartreux ; c'étoit au mois de Mai. Le jardin du solitaire étoit couvert de fleurs dans les plates-bandes et sur les espaliers. Pour lui, il s'étoit renfermé dans sa chambre, où l'on ne voyoit goutte. Pourquoi, lui dit mon ami, avez-vous fermé vos volets ? C'est, lui répondit le Chartreux, afin de méditer sans distraction sur les attributs de Dieu. Eh ! pensez-vous, reprit mon ami, en trouver de plus grands dans votre tête, que ne vous en montre la nature au mois de Mai ? Croyez-moi, ouvrez vos volets, et fermez votre imagination."—*Harmonies de la Nature*, t. i. p. 332.

between us and the light of His presence, though in that light only is there life!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Is the proportion of those, who are thus dwelling in darkness and in the shadow of death, as great among you, as it is in the countries where the Romish Church has maintained its dominion?

MONTESINOS.

The classes, among whom infidelity prevails, are different. In the most unbelieving of Romish countries the lower orders believe whatever the priest tells them : . . . utterly as they may disregard his moral precepts, and habitually as they may break every injunction in the decalogue, they never doubt the efficacy of his absolution, nor the saving mercy of the *Magna Mater*. Population has not increased there as it has with us; it has not outgrown the means of religious instruction, such as that instruction is. But we have a numerous class of people, which is scarcely known in any other part of Europe, bred in the filth and corruption of large towns and manufacturing districts, and allowed to grow up in that corruption as much neglected, and consequently becoming as depraved, as the vagrants of former times, against whom so many, and such severe laws, were :

enacted. These people are unbelievers, just as savages are, .. (shame to us that they should be so!) because, as far as regards all moral culture, all needful instruction, all humanizing and redeeming influences, they are left like savages, in the very midst of cultivated society. Bad as the consequences of this most culpable omission on the part of Government have been, and continue to be, they must have been far more hideous and appalling if Methodism had not intervened, and carried with it humanity and civilization, as far as it has spread, among these poor perishing creatures. Here, then, the difference between England and other countries is to our disadvantage and disgrace. If we look to the classes next above these, we shall find that speculative infidelity has descended lower among us than it has done where the arrangements of society are less complicated and artificial. There is no other country, France alone excepted, in which the poison is openly prepared for the people. There, indeed, the writings of Voltaire are circulated with as much zeal by one party, as the lying and blasphemous legends of a fraudulent superstition are by another; but if the former party are more successful in the metropolis and in large towns,

the propagandists of the Monkish and Marian* religion have greater facilities for distributing their wares throughout the provinces; and none of that mischief is even attempted there which is carried on throughout these kingdoms by periodical publications, daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly, and by some or other of these introduced into the remotest parts of the country. There are few towns, however small, in which a knot of scoffers and infidels may not be found in the lower walks of life, disciples usually of some sharp-witted, ready-tongued, and coarse-minded unbeliever, who has cast off the restraints of duty, and is too ignorant even to suspect himself of any deficiency in knowledge. There is scarcely a village into which opinions hostile to the Church Establishment, and to Christianity itself, are not carried, in the former case insolently, in the latter with more or less disguise, to the alehouse fireside, by some provincial journal, professedly enlisted in the service of a political faction, but aiming directly

* I thank the Jesuits "for teaching me that word." (Macedo. *Divi Tutelares*, p. 75.) Fr. Wichmans (a Norbertine, or Premontren, Canon of Tongerlo) addresses his *Brabantia Mariana*, *Lectori Mariano*, . . . a most useful distinction this between the Christian and the Marian faith!

at this end. Moreover, there are London book-sellers who carry on a trade in blasphemy, and their productions, which are as ignorant as they are impious, are dispersed gratuitously. I have heard of instances in which country tradesmen have received them with their goods ; should they be addressed to a person of good principles, who resents such an importation, the plea is, that they had been made use of as waste paper, without any knowledge of their contents ; but the desired object is gained if, as is more likely, they fall into the hands of shopmen, or shop-boys, who are in a state to receive the infection. Whence the funds are derived for this distribution, and for supporting the frequent prosecutions which have been brought against the publishers and venders of such poisons, has not come to light : but there are amateurs of infidelity in high life ; this is one of the ways in which superfluous wealth has been misemployed, and in no way can its misapplication have produced more misery and evil.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Misery and evil, indeed, for those who are taken in the snare, . . and for those who spread it ; for woe to them by whom the offence cometh ! But it is not thus that a nation can be made irreligious. Religion is too natural a

feeling, too essential to the being, too necessary for the heart of man, for its general influence to be suspended, or even endangered by such means, so long as it shall be seen and known to exist in any part of the community as a living and actuating principle. And this it will ever be in countries where it has once been firmly established, in however corrupt a form. Opinions may be changed, belief may be shaken, institutions modified or subverted, a false system may even prevail over the true; but while men are subject to disease, infirmity, and affliction, and death, the good never will exist without the hopes of religion, the wicked never without its fears. The vulgar retailers of infidelity can never shake this foundation.

MONTESINOS.

Alas! for human nature, when those hopes and fears are no longer under the regulation of a reasonable faith! When hope and fear break loose from that restraint, men become priest-ridden or devil-ridden, and yield themselves up to the horrors of the bloodiest Heathenism, or to the loathsome and pitiable extravagancies of the basest Monkery, as frightened horses plunge from a precipice, or dash themselves headlong against whatever opposes their way.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You, however, are in a state of society wherein the one of these extremes is impossible, the other not to be apprehended.

MONTESINOS.

Great and irreparable injury may, nevertheless, be done. Even such miserable labourers loosen the cement of society, while the more skilful engineers of evil are sapping and mining, and preparing the train for an explosion. As yet, however, the mischief has not spread widely in this lower grade; and it is precisely in that grade, also, that the counteracting spirit of fanaticism operates with most effect: and although men pass, as may be expected, from one extreme to the other, it is generally, by God's mercy, toward the better that they gravitate at last. But, in the educated classes, the balance of religious feeling is as much in favour of England, when compared with Roman-Catholic countries, as it may seem to be against it in the inferior ones. True it is that young men, who have just entered upon manhood, if they have an ambitious propensity for intellectual exertion, and if the foundation has either been neglected or unwisely laid, pass commonly through a stage of scepticism, or

unbelief; presumptuous youth is as liable to it as childhood to the small-pox and measles; the disease, too, is as rife and contagious as either; and sometimes draws after it injurious consequences, which long continue to be felt, sometimes lays fatal hold. True it is that there are circles where dogmatical Atheism struts and crows upon its dunghill;...that it has laid its eggs in seminaries founded for far other purposes, where its cockatrices are hatched and fostered, and from whence they come into the walks of life, hissing, wriggling, and venomous. True it is that there is an active and influential party in literature and in the state with whom blank unbelief is the esoteric doctrine, and who seek on all occasions industriously to wound and weaken what public opinion, and a regard to their own interest, withholds them from attacking openly. But the great and quiet body of the English gentry walk in the ways of their fathers, and hold fast to that Church for which Laud and his King suffered on the scaffold, and the noble army of our earlier martyrs at the stake. They hold to it with a sober and sedate, but sincere and strong attachment. Even the Dissenters, who rise into this rank, seldom continue in their nonconformity: their views are altered with their station; they see

and understand what they had before precluded themselves from seeing and understanding; and if they do not become conformists themselves, suffer their children to become so. The same hereditary and rooted feeling prevails among the yeomanry of the land. Here, then, we have a strong ground of hope and confidence on which to rest. But our strongest is in the Church itself, and in the character of its ministers. In Roman-Catholic states, and more especially in those which are most Catholic, and most Papal, infidelity is as common among the higher and better educated clergy, as the grossest superstition is among those who are taken, with little education, from the lower order of the people. Among the clergy of the Church of England, there may be some who believe and tremble; and a few, (they are but few,) who are false to the Establishment in which they are beneficed, and would let the wolf into the fold: but, if there be an Infidel among them, it is known only to that Almighty and Most Merciful Father to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid. Such a man may live self-reproached, but his want of belief will never infect others, ..it will be a hidden wound, ..*quod proxima nesciat uxor*.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The heart of England then, in this respect,
is sound !

MONTESINOS.

An unbelieving clergyman would be regarded as a monster. And, as this is one of the healthiest symptoms of public feeling, so is it one of the most remarkable points of difference between the state of the English and of the Romish Church. For in Roman-Catholic countries, even where the Inquisition is established, the Infidel Priest may always have a circle as well among his own brethren, as the laity, wherein he would think it a reproach were he supposed to believe in the religion which he professes. In that circle his understanding would be impeached by such a supposition : but it is no impeachment of his integrity that he continues publicly to profess what the laws will not permit him to abjure. He must go on with his part in the drama of delusion ; or he must cast himself upon the world a voluntary exile, exposed to all the privations and miseries of that condition ; or he must remain, and suffer martyrdom : and how should he be expected to bear this testimony against falsehood, who is ready with Pilate to ask, “ What is truth ? ”

being, like Pilate, in that pitiable state of mind which conceives that no answer can be given to the question ! One fatal error, which is most carefully inculcated, keeps its hold upon him, when he has shaken off the authority of his Church in other respects ; he still supposes Christianity to be such as that Church in its dogmas and rituals represents it ; in no other form has it ever been presented to his consideration, and he never thinks of turning from the mythology of the Breviary to the religion of the Gospel. Meantime, the exercise of his office tends to confirm him in his unbelief. He is engaged in functions which, when performed by one who does not implicitly believe himself to be invested with the portentous attributes which he assumes, must sear the conscience, and farther indurate the already hardened heart. He performs the daily routine of a service, in which, indeed, there is much that in itself is good, but in which it is not less certainly true, that folly and imposture stare him in the face ; he sees the weakness of human nature, and too much of its wickedness, also, is laid open to him ; till, learning at last to congratulate himself that his lot in life has been assigned among knaves instead of dupes, (for into these classes it is that he divides mankind,) he says complacently,

“*populus vult decipi et decipietur*,” ..as so many of his fraternity have said before him, and so many say with him at this day. Let it not be supposed that men cannot attain to this fearful state without a strong predominance of evil in their nature! Such persons may have, and are likely to have better dispositions, as well as better understandings, than those who, being found unfit for any other branch of ecclesiastical service, are, for that reason, destined* to preside over matters of faith as members of the Holy Office! The more selfish sensualists, the thoroughly profligate, the *sollicitantes*, are as likely to be found among those Priests who trust in the validity of absolution, and expect to buy themselves off from Purgatory, or at the worst to be prayed out of it in some reasonable time, as among those who doubt of every thing beyond the grave, and standing in no awe of judgement

* That this was the case in the Spanish Universities we learn from Dr. Villanueva. “*Era voz comun entonces* (he is speaking of the reign of Charles III.) *que para los mas habiles de aquellos colegios (que ciertamente los hubo) eran por lo general las mitras, y las dignidades y canongias, especialmente las de oficio : y en el orden civil las togas de las audiencias, chancillerias y consejos supremos ; y para los ineptos las plazas de Inquisicion ; á cuyo propósito se decia con escandalo, y lo oi yo muchas veces, præstet fides supplementum.*”—*Vida Literaria de D. Joaquín Lorenzo Villanueva*, t. i. p. 11.

to come, trouble themselves with no devices for eluding it. Ministers of the Romish Church, though they be persons of natural piety, good feelings, and virtuous aspirations, may fall into the state of infidelity which I have described ; and such in melancholy truth were they who are present to my thoughts while I speak, ..for the picture has been taken from reality : ..men far above the standard of their countrymen ; richly gifted with moral not less than intellectual endowments ; just, generous, high-minded, and gentle-hearted ; respected and admired and loved by all around them, but most so by those who knew them best ; men who, in more favourable circumstances, might have been the pride of their country, and the benefactors of their kind, as they were the ornament, and the delight of the circle in which they moved ; but who have perished miserably, and guiltily, in revolutionary movements, ..because the root of religion was wanting in them, and they ventured to do evil in the hope that good might follow. God be merciful to them, for His dear Son's sake ! I will not think that the sin of rejecting Him can be laid to their charge, for in truth they knew Him not ! They “ did it ignorantly, in unbelief ! ”*

* 1 Tim. i. 13.

But these painful recollections have drawn me from the point... Let us contrast, without reference to any such catastrophe, the situation of a Romish Priest thus gifted, and thus disposed, with that of a young man who has entered into holy orders in the English Church, not so much from any predilection of his own, as in conformity to the destination which has been chosen for him, and because preferment is within his reach, or his prospect;..let us suppose him to be one who has not paid more attention to the evidences and doctrines of Christianity, than was required for passing an easy examination; and who, from vanity, half-knowledge, presumptuousness, and love of display, might very probably, if he had followed any other profession, have run, with all sails set, upon the shallows of infidelity. Have I taken a fair case?

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Certainly not too favourable a one on your own side.

MONTESINOS.

Such a man, however unspiritual, however unworthy the motives which have influenced his choice, places himself, nevertheless, in a situation favourable to his mental and spiritual improvement. His profession imposes upon

him just so much restraint as is salutary for his moral and intellectual nature, nothing more; nothing against which the heart rises, or the understanding revolts. The discharge of his functions tends to strengthen, to establish, and to quicken his belief, not to shake, or torpify it. The service which he is called upon to perform deals not in legends which, beyond all possibility of dissembling to himself the conviction, he feels and knows to be absurd and false. Instead of these, he delivers in our fine liturgy the doctrines of Christianity pure and undefiled; its proofs are before him in the Bible, opening more and more upon the willing mind, the more it is perused; it is a regular part of his office to enforce its precepts, and in so doing he cannot but become sensible of their unspeakable importance. He is not requested to act in any thing which he suspects or knows to be a juggle, such as the exhibition of relics, the worship of wonder-working images, and the performance of miracles. He is not exposed to the pollutions of the Confessional. His professional library is neither filled with extravagant and impious fictions, which he is required to believe, and in the service of the Church must deliver to the people for undoubted and sacred truths; nor of books of casuistry, which sophisticate the

understanding and defile the heart; nor of rhapsodies of idolatrous and carnal devotion : instead of these he has the works of our English divines, who, with erudition and philosophy and eloquence, which have not been, and cannot be, surpassed, vindicate the authority of Scripture, expound its truths, and apply its all-important doctrines. All circumstances thus contribute to render him a sincere and faithful minister, even though his first profession should have been merely formal. Once embarked, he is borne along upon the main stream of belief; there are neither rocks, shoals, nor rapids in his course, no side eddies which may hurry him back, no whirlpools wherein he may be absorbed and lost.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You have taken for your comparison on the one side men of superior and ambitious talents, and on the other, persons who, possessing fair abilities and easy tempers, may with little difficulty be inclined to good or evil, but escape evil because they are not led into temptation. And you argue that the latter, if they were Roman Catholic Priests, would not fall into the same happy and facile belief; and that the former would not be exposed to the same danger of infidelity in the Anglican as in the Papal Church.

MONTESINOS.

I argue thus upon assumptions which, were it required, I am prepared by fair reasoning to prove, that the circumstances of the English Church are likely to confirm and invigorate the belief of its ministers; but that in the Romish, the heart instinctively revolts against the unnatural privations which are imposed upon it, and the understanding against the gross and tangible falsehoods with which the doctrine and practice of that Church are so intermingled and overlaid, that religion is represented in the garb of mythology, and truth itself wears the semblance of imposture.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

I am not disposed to call in question either of these assumptions. But you present your Anglican Clergyman as a contrast to the Infidel Romanist, not as a representative likeness of his brethren. Is he above or below the general standard?

MONTESINOS.

I know not in what manner the mean standard could be computed: the character which I have imagined is a common one. Undoubtedly there are many, very many, far above it in intellectual, moral, and spiritual

qualifications; but too surely those who fall below it are likely to be more numerous.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Too surely they must be so. For it is not possible that men, properly qualified by education and manners, should be found for starved benefices; nor likely that the proper qualifications of heart and understanding should generally be possessed by persons who are destined for the priesthood, merely because in that profession they may with most facility be advantageously settled in life. In the former class, coarse, and sometimes scandalous, livers will, of necessity, be found: among the latter there must be not a few, who, though they may avoid open scandal, are more likely to find the Establishment serviceable to them, than to render service to the Establishment. The latter inconvenience belongs to the system of patronage, and may be remedied so far as Government may be convinced that it is its policy, and individuals that it is their duty, to dispose of it with a righteous regard to character. There is an awful responsibility upon both! This is less likely to be felt by Government, because, though bodies of men have a general sense of honour, they have no general sense of conscience. They may, however, be

made to understand their interest; blind indeed must they be, if in this matter they do not distinctly see it! But where will you find a remedy for the inconvenience which the impoverishment of the Church produces? “*Ad tenuitatem Beneficiorum necessario sequitur ignorantia Sacerdotum.*” And long before he who is called the Panormitan wrote thus, it was remarked by a Roman Satirist, that poverty brings with it nothing harder for men to endure than the contempt to which it renders them subject.

MONTESINOS.

Undoubtedly this was the principal cause of that contempt into which the Clergy had fallen in the days of Eachard and Stackhouse; and it is at this day one great and never-failing cause of the increase of Methodism, and of the various Dissenting sects. Wherever there is a worldling, who takes no other care of his flock than to look after the wool at shearing time,.. wherever the shepherd neglects his charge, or is incompetent to it,.. wherever the charge is greater than even the best will, and the utmost exertions can perform, there the Dissenter, or the Methodist, steps in. A wide field of opportunity is thus opened to them in those parishes, scattered throughout the land, which are in the

hands of unworthy, or inefficient incumbents, . . and in all those extensive districts, where mines or manufactures have brought together a swarming population.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Mark here how curiously opposite causes are operating alike to the detriment and danger of your Church Establishment! Both its wealth and its poverty bring into it persons who want either the natural fitness, or the acquirements necessary for the proper discharge of their duty. Its wealth exposes it to envy and rapaciousness; its poverty to contempt. Against envy and rapaciousness it were unreasonable to expect that any reasoning should avail. They who hate the Church will seek to destroy it; an erring conscience makes this the duty of all those who conscientiously dissent from it: and should your Government in a season of financial difficulty be under the direction of illprincipled politicians, or unprincipled ones, a compromise with its enemies might be apprehended. But this evil (in its certain consequences the worst that could befall the nation, for it would bring down, as with an earthquake, the whole fabric of your prosperity)...this evil never can be brought to pass, even with all the efforts which are continually making for that wicked end,

and all the causes which unhappily facilitate and assist them, . . if the people are made sensible that there is no property so beneficially distributed for the general good as that which, by the wisdom not less than the piety of their forefathers, was set apart to be a provision for the ministers of the altar. The English are a sober people.

MONTESINOS.

Charles I. bore testimony to that part of their character, at a time when they were most infatuated. But error has ever an easier access to the mind than truth, when it addresses itself to the weak and selfish and corrupt part of human nature. Let any person in the middle ranks of life, who knows any thing of his ancestry for two or three generations, ask himself what benefit they have derived, and he himself in consequence, from so much of the church property as may have fallen to their portion in its service; and then let him calculate whether he and they would have been gainers, even in this low, pounds-shillings-and-pence point of view, if there had been no such charge upon the land as that of tithes! Let any parent, who has a diligent and hopeful son at school or at college, ask himself whether the youth's chance in life would be as good as it is, if the Church lands

were secularized, if tithes were abolished and the clergy left, like the Dissenting ministers, to depend upon their congregations? . . . And if we had Dukes of Durham and Winchester, instead of Bishops, would the lands attached to the title be more productive, or the tenants sit at easier rents? Should it not, on the other hand, seem as evident as it is certain, that every one is interested in upholding an establishment by means of which some of the public wealth is set apart to be disposed of, not by the accident of birth, but among those who may deserve it by their learning, their abilities, and their character; and that, too, under the notorious condition, that without character neither learning nor abilities, however eminent, will be regarded as a claim? . . . a distribution whereby no man has been, is, or can be injured, while some scores of individuals in every generation are raised by it to stations of dignity, and some hundreds of families placed in respectability and comfort? And yet the wealth of the Church, which, when thus regarded, might be thought necessarily to secure it, by connecting its preservation with the plain, tangible interest of every household, from the highest to the lowest, is, on the contrary, a cause of danger at this time, because men will not thus reasonably regard it. Already voices

are heard in Parliament recommending a second spoliation! A generation ago, if any man had ventured to utter in either House the unprotestant, unchristian, unenglish wish, the general feeling would have put him down, and that with a force from which he would not easily have risen again: now, he is heard with applause by one party, and too often without rebuke from those who ought to know that such opinions should never be allowed to pass unrebuked, because, if they are unanswered, they are represented to be unanswerable. Combinations are formed for ridding the land of what Political Economists call the burden of the tithes. Mr. Pitt, among his other errors, gave ear to this, and at one time entertained an intention of selling them. Men with worse intentions, and no better judgement, will gladly avail themselves of his authority for promoting so injurious a measure. It may be looked to as one consequence which would follow upon the admission of the Roman-Catholics into Parliament. For in that case the Test Act must, of course, be abolished; of course, I say, because the well-meaning but short-sighted men, by whose consent the fence had been broken to let the foxes in, would find it impossible afterwards to keep the wolves out. The

Dissenters, who would then in a far greater proportion find their way into the House, would league there with the Unbelievers; and some of the Squirarchy, who are not lay-impropriators, might be duped into the alliance. The Romanists would faithfully follow the Vatican's old policy of promoting any thing which should injure the Anglican Church. And by such a combination the tithes would be offered as a resource to some distressed administration in difficult times,..even if the Government should not have been previously delivered into the hands of what Johnson called our bottomless Whigs,..which it must be before a measure so full of mortal danger, so directly in opposition to the principles upon which the Protestant Succession was established, as that of admitting the Roman-Catholics into Parliament, and thereby investing men with power in the State, whose bounden religious duty it is to use every endeavour for re-establishing the Roman-Catholic Church in this kingdom, can possibly be effected.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Take into the account of this danger that which in such a case would arise from the existence of an increasing sect like the Methodists, with an embodied and efficient hierarchy,

professing to hold the doctrines of the Establishment, and assenting to its ritual, and its whole discipline, saving only such parts as it suits their present convenience to dispense with. A minister of Thomas Cromwell's stamp, or one who, like Jane Seymour's brother, thinks such edifices as Glastonbury Abbey might beneficially be converted into manufactories, might make his bargain with a popular sect for undertaking the business of public religion at a reduced rate; and he would take credit to himself when he laid the arrangement before Parliament, in his Budget, for a measure of economical reform. The desire of fame which is felt by such men extends not beyond a nine days' popularity, .. and their foresight of consequences hardly reaches so far!

MONTESINOS.

Something of this kind took place in the great triumph of hypocrisy and fanaticism (always the most loving of allies) under the second and greater Cromwell; or rather before he had taken into his hands the power, which, had it lawfully been placed there, he, of all living men, was most worthy to have wielded. The treacherous Presbyterians, by whom the Church Establishment was betrayed, and who helped themselves liberally out of its spoils,

made such an arrangement, set up the discipline and the Directory, and slew an Archbishop, as an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord, upon their installation. The danger of which we speak seemed probable to me when I first began to look into the system of the Methodists; but, upon further knowledge and reflection, methinks it is hardly to be considered as among the contingencies of evil that await us. They appear to have attained the point beyond which they are not likely, in this country, to make any considerable advance, because their sects and sub-sects intercept the recruits who would otherwise be added to the old body; these will in like manner be again divided, carrying the principle of schism in their constitution, as grafts take with them the diseases of the parent stock: and any coalition among them is less likely, than the return of a respectable portion to the Establishment from which they have been led astray. The danger, if there be any of this kind, would rather be from the Calvinistic Methodists, and the Calvinizing Clergy, who spread themselves among more influential classes, and who have already a party in the Church. But I do not regard this with any serious apprehension. For although many sects and parties would combine, and indeed have

already combined, for the work of demolition, yet, when the plans for rebuilding came under consideration, the old disagreements between them would break out more virulently than ever, and the confusion at Babel would be represented to the life. This is well understood by their allies, the Infidels and the Romanists, each of which hope to have the field at last to themselves. But neither will the one succeed in their desire of destroying Christianity, nor the other in re-establishing the religion of St. Dominic and St. Dunstan.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Whereon is this confidence founded which you so decidedly express?

MONTESINOS.

On the promises and the providence of God.
“ There are many devices in a man’s heart ; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall* stand.”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But Providence works always by human means, giving or withholding its blessings according as the ways of men are good or evil. The best institutions will not support themselves if they be vigorously attacked, and feebly defended : and with you, zeal and activity are

* Proverbs, xix. 21.

on the erring side. Is it that they have not the same opportunities of entering the Church, ...or not the same encouragement if they are found there?

MONTESINOS.

The latter part of the question may be answered as I could wish. There is at this time greater encouragement than has been known since the accession of the House of Hanover, from which time, for full half a century, the interests of religion were scandalously disregarded. Now, though men are sometimes promoted undeservedly, desert, where it is found, is rarely left unrewarded. But, constituted as society at present is, there certainly is not the same access for zeal into the Establishment, which is offered in the ranks of its enemies.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There is not, then, that encouragement for poor scholars which existed in former times? not the same means of advancement which were open to the Wolseys and Cromwells and Latimers?

MONTESINOS.

For the Wolseys and Cromwells there are other, and more ways of advancement. But cheap learning is no longer to be obtained,

education being, of all things, that which has advanced most enormously in its cost. This has been caused by the great increase of the middle ranks, by the higher degree of civilization which exists in those ranks, and by the general improvement in the condition of the clergy. The endowments in our schools and colleges, which were formerly the portion of poor scholars, have become objects of competition for the sons of the wealthy; they were never too many, and the additions which have been made to them are so trifling that they can hardly be taken into calculation, while the number of competitors has increased tenfold, and is increasing every generation. The poor scholar is not absolutely excluded by this, but his chances are diminished; and what is perhaps even more discouraging, the disadvantages of his situation are so greatly augmented, that nothing short of the most extraordinary abilities, and the most painful industry, can enable him to surmount them. These, indeed, make their way; and as they are sure of meeting in the University the most liberal assistance, it is perhaps on the whole best that, in the present state of society, there should be no bounty for bringing forward aspirants of inferior capacity.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

So it may seem. But some evil there manifestly is in a change which renders it more difficult for those who are humbly born, and placed in unfavourable circumstances, to follow those studies whereto good parts, virtuous inclinations, and laudable ambition, might impel them. It is no matter for regret that such persons should labour under the inevitable disadvantage of receiving, at the best, only an ordinary school education, while the sons of the opulent are brought forward by the most skilful and diligent tuition. Wealth ensures this for its children: and it is well, on all accounts, that some part of the expenditure of the wealthy should take this direction; and, after all, native vigour of mind will prevail against such odds. Forced culture is not needful for our elms and oaks; they require only room for their growth. And as natural precocity is always to be regarded with fear, so the precociousness which art produces cannot be without its dangers: the first frequently terminates in early death; the latter dwarfs, or lastingly debilitates the faculties which have been called into exertion too soon, and have been overtasked. But are there no other disadvantages of a more

serious nature? Is the poor scholar upon the same footing in your colleges that he was one or two hundred years ago? Have not offices become servile, both in reality and in appearance, which carried with them no such character in old times, when they were performed in great houses by youths of high birth, in the course of a generous education, suited to their birth and expectancies? Is not inferiority of condition in your Universities made more humiliating than it was in times when the distinction of ranks was more broadly marked, ..and is not that humiliation of a kind which is likely to produce any thing rather than humility? As those distinctions have been more shaded into each other, has there not been less bountiful patronage on the one side, and less of the kindly and grateful feeling of dependence on the other? ...for a kindly and a grateful feeling it is; and they who think that it is well exchanged for the pride of independence, are in danger of losing the blessing which has been promised to the poor in spirit, and to the meek. One consequence of all this is, that the dissenting ministry is filled with men, the greater part of whom would have become clergy of the Establishment, if there had been the same facilities for entering it.

MONTESINOS.

Certainly it is not the desire of independence* that leads them into that service. Their ministry, however, has its temptations; for although the Dissenters can rid themselves easily of a scandalous preacher, and therefore are obnoxious to none of that reproach which such men bring upon the Church, on the other hand, Tartuffe is a much more frequent character among them than in the Establishment. In Romish countries, as in your days, such persons would have become Monks or Friars, both the devout and the worldlings.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The circumstances, which exclude the better part of them from your Establishment, have produced a great and growing evil, and too

* I happened once to ask a dissenting minister to what denomination he belonged; he replied, that he was an Independent;.. “so called,” he added, “though we are the most dependent poor creatures on the face of the earth.”.. The confession accords with the following Advertisement, which has been circulated with a recent number of the Evangelical Magazine. “WANTED, two Persons, respectably connected, of pleasing manners and genteel address, to beg for a Chapel, the Minister of which is indisposed. One must be resident in London; and the other, if single, and a Minister, would be preferred. Of course none will apply who cannot bring the highest testimonials for religious character, &c., and give security, if required.”

probably it may be found a growing danger also. They have likewise led to a change in the Universities which is far from beneficial, and which has, in no slight degree, contributed to the decay of that sound learning by which your Church was raised and defended, and without which it cannot be supported. Your Colleges are no longer seats of learning in the old and veritable sense; no longer the abode of men whose lives are devoted to the quiet pursuit of knowledge, and who find in that pursuit its own reward. They have become mere seminaries, ..and for raising dwarf trees. Habits of life, more accordant to the age than to the place, have been introduced, habits which are injurious any where, and especially reprehensible there. Hence that increased expenditure, which in so great a degree excludes the poor scholar from his chance of those endowments which were intended for men of his class. Hence the greater evil, that no sooner has a young man compleated his own scholastic education, and obtained a fellowship at its close, than his whole time is immediately appropriated to the education of others. At an age when his faculties, with the strength of manhood, have, or ought to have, the unabated ardour of youth, a stop is put to his advancement. The spirit of the world has intruded,

and taken possession of the place: in obedience to that spirit, he makes lucre, instead of learning, his object, his business, his desire; giving himself up to the drudgery of tuition for the sake of gain, when he ought to be engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, and in that self-improvement which might qualify him for his proper vocation in this world, and arm him at all points for the arduous service upon which he has entered.

MONTESINOS.

It is a humiliating confession, but I fear that in no other country is learning so little loved and followed for its own sake as in England; a national reproach, which, nevertheless, arises not so much from the low-mindedness of individuals, as from the circumstances wherein they are placed. The number of persons who, if favourable opportunity were afforded them, might be willing to make learning the business and the delight of their lives, with the ardour and ability requisite for pursuing it to good effect, must in any generation necessarily be very small. How little, then, is the chance of their being born to the possession of such wealth as might enable them to indulge their genius! and if such men are born in such a station, they must be endowed with a strength of moral character, which is far more rare than the

gifts either of intellect or fortune, or they will not be able to overcome the debilitating effects of early prosperity. Such men, therefore, are the rarest of God's creatures. But for those who, with the same natural endowments, are born to the wooden spoon, and have to make their way in the world, they soon are made to feel that the care of providing for immediate wants leaves them little leisure, and less heart for those worthier labours, by which they might once have dreamt of making themselves "for ever known." The booksellers and the public must be their patrons; the former, of course, can only act as caterers for the latter; and the many-headed beast is a foul feeder. To literature, therefore, as a means of subsistence, none but the rash and ill-advised, the unfortunates and castaways of society, will betake themselves. But what are called the learned professions, allow no leisure for any pursuit that looks beyond the present. The lawyer has no sooner obtained a professional reputation, than he becomes the very slave of his practice, . . . and well is it if his own soul is not entangled in the snares which he is perpetually engaged in spinning for others. The physician has indeed the advantage that his path is in the way of intellectual and moral improvement; but his, also, is an occupation which engrosses him, and

which rarely can leave the mind at leisure, or at ease, for excursive and voluntary labours. From the clergy more might be expected, and more is found : but how few among them are blest with the disposal of their own time, and the opportunity of improving it ! In retired situations libraries and encouragement are wanting ; in populous parishes, the cares and duties of his cure require the whole attention of a faithful pastor. Secular business, which, unconnected as it is with their sacred calling, and in some respects ill according with it, it is nevertheless in many situations necessary that they should undertake, makes large demands upon them. And they who are promoted to the dignities of the Church, find that when they were advanced from a private station they left behind them the leisure and the opportunities, as well as the freedom and the tranquillity and the comfort of private life. It is therefore from the minor dignitaries, the few of the clergy who possess benefices where the duty is little and the income sufficient, and the still fewer who, careless of cost or consequence in their ardour, overlook, and sometimes overcome, all obstacles, that literary service can be looked for. The disposition and the ability God alone can give : the allotment which might place these in full action is at man's disposal :

but when it is considered that what are called family livings will be disposed of according to family claims, the best that can be hoped is, that they may for the most part be respectably filled; 'and the same* must be said of that portion of the crown patronage, which is bestowed among political claimants, though public opinion interposes there a stronger check.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The more, therefore, is it to be desired that your Universities should again become seats of learning, as they were originally intended to be, and not mere places of education.

MONTESINOS.

I know not how this is to be brought about, seeing that the changes of society have made them what they are; and that, as places of education, they are essential parts of our system.

* "How does it happen," says a friend, whose letter has just reached me, "that the opponents of the Church of England always miss the vulnerable points? They attack our faith, and we have no difficulty in proving that we are orthodox. They attack the property of the Church, and we easily make out a legal title. Now, if they were to call upon us to prove that right faith has led to right practice, and that Church property is employed for Church purposes, we should have but little to say for ourselves.".. More, I believe, in this generation than in the last, (more, indeed, it had need be!) and more I trust in the next than in this.

Even for this object they are straitened, so greatly has the population of this country increased, while the increase of those persons, for whom such education is thought necessary, has been in far greater proportion.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Another University, then, is wanted ?

MONTESINOS.

Undoubtedly it is. For, although the enlargements which are now in progress at Cambridge are more extensive than all which were made during the last century, the new buildings will not do more than accommodate the students who have hitherto necessarily been lodged in the town, a practice in many respects inconvenient and injurious. So it will be at Oxford, if Oxford should follow the example. But both Universities are already sufficiently numerous; and it is far more desirable that a third should be established, than that any further increase should take place in them. There are difficulties in the way; and, if these were overcome, the *Religio Loci* would long continue to attract those, who could choose, to the elder institutions. On the other hand, much might be expected from that laudable desire which would be felt, of raising the new University in

other respects to an equal estimation with those which have so long been the glory of the land.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

An advantage might be given it, if its fellowships were not to be voidable by marriage; the restriction is not necessary where residence within the walls is not required, and, not being necessary, it is injurious, because it renders men, whose dearest hopes are indefinitely delayed, discontented with their lot. The usages of your society tend but too strongly to defer marriage in the middle ranks of life beyond the time which nature indicates, and which wise foresight would approve.

MONTESINOS.

This may be one cause why so few of those, who remain in College till middle or declining age, apply themselves there to those disinterested, and self-rewarding studies, for which the Universities afford facilities hardly to be found elsewhere. The fellowship was not more the object of their desire when they were labouring to obtain it in youth, than the succession is which may enable them to vacate it, and enter upon that course of domestic life to which every man looks forward with an instinctive longing, unless he has rendered himself unworthy of the happiness which in that course

of life, and in that only, is to be found. Expectation, however remote, of the chance that may remove him, keeps him always in a certain degree unsettled, and discontented patience produces insensibly a distaste for the place, and indisposes him for making the right use of its advantages.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

If you would make men good subjects, good servants of the public, good stewards of that which is committed to their charge, you must place them in circumstances favourable to their own happiness. No plants will thrive in a cold and meagre soil, ungenial to their nature; nor, even if the soil be generous, will they put forth flowers, and yield fruit in due season after their kind, unless they have the enjoyment and the benefit of air and sunshine.

MONTESINOS.

The experiment might well be tried in a new institution. The first, and indeed the only difficulty, that of raising funds, might be overcome, if the intention were earnestly entertained, and any proper inclination shown on the part of Government to promote it. Some of those reservoirs of private wealth, which are filled in every generation by men whose souls can hardly be conceived of as any thing else than glands for secreting lucre, might be ex-

pected to be opened in this direction by posthumous liberality. Something might be expected from that better wisdom which discovers in time that riches must prove the reverse of a blessing to those unto whom they are entrusted, unless they are well employed. And that national and characteristic generosity, which in this country has never failed to answer every just call that has been made upon it, would not be found wanting here. You said to me, that the spirit which built and endowed monasteries has passed away. Methinks it is not dead, but sleepeth! It waits only for opportunity to awaken it, and encouragement to call it forth, and it would then be manifested in a manner suited to the state of knowledge, and the real interests of the nation.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Where would you fix your University?

MONTESINOS.

York has been named when such a design has been proposed: but a situation farther north would be preferable; because it should be chosen with a view to Scotland, for the Episcopalians of that country, and not for them alone, but for all who wish to preserve their sons from the Pestilence which, in certain Scotch Universities, walketh at noon day.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Wherever there is a Cathedral, there would be a *Religio Loci*, into which the University would enter.

MONTESINOS.

There are many places in the North where such a feeling might be revived, though that one to which your thoughts and mine would instantly recur, . . . that which was the earliest seat of learning in this kingdom, is desecrated beyond all possibility of purification. It has become a place of colliers and keelmen ; and if in national gratitude a monument were to be erected, as it ought to be, in honour of the Venerable Bede, a spot whereon it might decently be set up could not now be found at Jarrow, where his happy and holy life was past.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Durham, where his dust is deposited, would be in all respects an appropriate place, and not the worse for having been the see of Cuthbert Tonstal.

MONTESINOS.

There are great and good names connected with Durham, both of earlier and later date. The suitableness of that city for the seat of a third University is so apparent, that Oliver Cromwell, at the petition of certain northern

gentry, took measures for establishing one there. But the part of the spoils of the bishopric, little as it was, which he appropriated to that purpose, was thought too much by those who were for sharing the whole plunder among themselves: opposition was made by Oxford and Cambridge, both being at that time in hands from which nothing generous could be expected, and thus the scheme failed even before the Restoration, which would probably have subverted it. Durham would be the fittest place in the north of England, unless Hexham may be deemed preferable.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

On the score of antiquity Hexham has greater claims, and as an ancient seat of learning. And as it is one of those places which were grievously injured by the dissolution of the Monasteries, the reparation, that might thus be made, is a consideration which ought not altogether to be overlooked. You look, methinks, as though this were a consideration which, if mentioned, would only be despised. If such be your meaning, it is an ill symptom of the state of public feeling in these days. Whatever tends to withdraw men from the always too powerful influence of the present, and to connect them with other times, past or to come, . . . whatever may lead them to

extend their views out of their own generation, forward or in retrospect, . . . whatever gives them a more diffused benevolence, a more extended range for their gratitude or their desires, individuals, if they are sensible of their own highest interest, would cherish in their own hearts, and Governments would do every thing to encourage in the people. They who care nothing for their ancestors, will care little for their posterity, . . . indeed, little for anything except themselves.

COLLOQUY XII.

BLENCATHRA.—THRELKELD TARN.—THE
CLIFFORDS.

OF the very many Tourists who are annually brought to this Land of Lakes by what have now become the migratory habits of the opulent classes, there is a great proportion of persons who are desirous of making the shortest possible tarriance in any place; whose object is to get through their undertaking with as little trouble as they can, and whose inquiries are mainly directed to find out what it is not necessary for them to see; happy when they are comforted with the assurance, that it is by no means required of them to deviate from the regular track, and that that which cannot be seen easily, need not be seen at all. In this way our οἱ πολλοὶ take their degree as Lakers.

Nevertheless, the number of those who truly enjoy the opportunities which are thus afforded them, and have a genuine generous delight in beholding the grander and the lovelier scenes of

a mountainous region, is sufficient to render this a good and wholesome fashion. The pleasure which they partake conduces as much to moral and intellectual improvement, as to health, and present hilarity. It produces no distaste for other scenes, no satiety, nor other exhaustion than what brings with it its own remedy in sound sleep. Instead of these, increase of appetite grows here by what it feeds on, and they learn to seek and find pleasure of the same kind in tamer landscapes. They who have acquired in these countries a love of natural scenery, carry with them in that love a perpetual source of enjoyment; resembling in this respect the artist, who, in whatever scenes he may be placed, is never at a loss for something from which his pencil may draw forth a beauty, which uncultivated eyes would fail to discover in the object itself. In every country, however poor,..there is something of “ free Nature’s grace;”..wherever there is wood and water, wherever there are green fields,..wherever there is an open sky, the feeling which has been called forth, or fostered among the mountains, may be sustained. It is one of our most abiding as well as of our purest enjoyments,.. a sentiment which seems at once to humble and exalt us, which from natural emotion leads us

to devotional thoughts and religious aspirations, grows therefore with our growth, and strengthens when our strength is failing us.

I wonder not at those heathens who worshipped in high places. There is an elasticity in the mountain air, which causes an excitement of spirits, in its immediate effect like that of wine when, taken in due measure, it gladdens the heart of man. The height and the extent of the surrounding objects seem to produce a correspondent expansion and elevation* of mind; and the silence and solitude contribute to this emotion. You feel as if in another region, almost in another world. If a tourist in this country inquires which of our mountains it may

* This feeling has never been more feelingly expressed than by Burnet in his fine chapter, *de Montibus*. "*Præter Cælorum faciem, et immensa spacia æthereæ, stellarumque gratissimum aspectum, oculos meos atque animum nihil magis delectare solet, quam Oceanum intueri, et magnos montes terræ. Nescio quid grande habent et augustum uterque horum, quo mens excitatur ad ingentes affectus et cogitationes: summum rerum Authorem et Opificem indè faciliè contuemur et admiramur, mentemque nostram, quæ cum voluptate res magnas contemplatur, non esse rem parvam cum gaudio recognoscimus. Et quæcunque umbram infiniti habent, ut habent omnia quæ non faciliè comprehendimus, ob magnitudinem rei, et sensûs nostri plenitudinem, gratum quandam stuporem animo affundunt.*"—*Telluris Theoria Sacra*, l. i. c. 9.

be worth his while to ascend, he may be told any, or all. Helvellyn and Skiddaw and Blencathra, Scawfell and Great Gable, Hindsgarth and Causey Pike, each is unlike all the others in the prospect that it presents, each has features of its own, and all may well repay the labour of ascending them.

There is little or nothing of historical or romantic interest belonging to this region. In this respect it is very unlike the Scotch Border, where Sir Walter can entertain his guests during a morning ride with tales of murders, executions, house-besieging and house-burning, as parts of family history belonging to every homestead of which he comes in sight. The Border history is of no better character on the English side; but this part of the country was protected by the Solway, and by its natural strength, nor does it appear, at any time after it became English, to have been troubled with feuds. The English Barons, indeed, were by no means so often engaged in private wars as their Scottish neighbours, or the nobles on the continent; their contests were with the Crown, seldom with each other, and never with their vassals. Those contests were carried on at a distance from our Lake-land, where the inhabitants, being left in peace, seem to have enjoyed it, and

never to have forfeited its blessings by engaging in the ways, and contracting the disposition of marauders. They had, therefore, neither ballad heroes, nor ballad poets, happy in having afforded no field for the one, and no materials of this kind for the other.

A heap of stones is the doubtful* monument of a battle which, in the middle of the tenth century, put an end to the kingdom of the Cumbrian Britons; after a war in which the victorious allies must have been actuated by any motive rather than policy; the King of South Wales having united with Edmund the Elder against a people of his own race, and Edmund giving the little kingdom, when they had conquered it, to the King of Scotland. That heap at Dunmailraise is our only historical monument, if such it may be called. There is something more for the imagination in knowing that three centuries earlier, the old bard, Llywarc Hen, was a prince of Cumbria, or of a part† thereof. He is said to have attained

* Doubtful, because it is at the division of the two counties, upon the high road, and on the only pass, and may very probably have been intended to mark the division.

† Argoed, which, according to Mr. Owen, was part of the present Cumberland: it lay west of the Forest of Celyddon, and was bordered by that wood to the east, as the name implies.

the extraordinary age of an hundred and fifty ; and, having been driven from his own country, to have died near Bala, at a place which is still called after him, the Cot* of Llywarc the Aged. From his own lamentations we know that he had four-and-twenty sons, “ wearing the golden chain, leaders of battles, men that were valiant opposers of the foe,” and that he lived to see them all slain ! St. Herbert, our only Saint, is less remarkable among saints than Llywarc among poets ; the single circumstance of his life that has been remembered, or invented of him, is that of his dying at the same hour with his absent friend St. Cuthbert, according to their mutual wish and prayer. From St. Herbert down to the tragedy of Lord Derwentwater, (who was connected with this country only by his possessions and his title,) our local history has nothing that leads a traveller to connect the scenes through which he is passing with past events, . . one of the great pleasures of travelling, and not the least of its utilities. The story of the Shepherd Lord Clifford affords a single exception ; that story, which was known only to a few antiquaries, till it was told so

* Pabell Llywarc Hen, in the parish of Llanvor, in which church, according to tradition, he was buried.





Drawn by W. Westall A.R.A.

Engraved by Robert Wallis

beautifully in verse by Wordsworth, gives a romantic interest to Blencathra.

They who would ascend this mountain, should go from Keswick about six miles along the Penrith road, then take the road which branches from it on the left, (proceeding along the mountain side toward Heskett Newmarket,) and begin to ascend a little way farther on by a green shepherd's path, distinctly marked, on the left side of a gill. That path may be followed on the mountain toward a little stream which issues from Threlkeld Tarn;* you leave it, keeping the stream on the right, and mount a short and rugged ascent, up which a horse may be led without difficulty; and thus, with little fatigue, the Tarn is reached. A wild spot it is as ever was chosen by a cheerful party where to rest, and take their merry repast upon a summer's day. The green mountain, the dark pool, the crag under which it lies, and the little stream which steals from it, are the only objects; the gentle voice of that stream the only sound,

* Absurd accounts have been published both of the place itself, and the difficulty of reaching it. The Tarn has been said to be so deep that the reflection of the stars may be seen in it at noon day, . . and that the sun never shines on it. One of these assertions is as fabulous as the other, . . and the Tarn, like all our Tarns, is shallow.

unless a kite be wheeling above, or a sheep bleats on the fell side. A silent, solitary place; and such solitude heightens social enjoyment, as much as it conduces to lonely meditation.

Ascending from hence toward the brow of the mountain, you look back through the opening, where the stream finds its way, to a distant view of the open country about Penrith, with the long line of Crossfell bounding it. When the brow is reached, you are on the edge of that bold and rugged front which Blencathra presents when seen from the road to Matterdale, or from the Vale of St. John's. A portion of the hill, (Hall-fell it is called,) somewhat pyramidal in shape, stands out here like an enormous buttress, separated from the body of the mountain on all sides by deep ravines. These have apparently been formed by some water-spout, bursting upon what was once the green breast of the mountain, and thus opening water-courses, which the rain and storms have continually been deepening. In looking down these ravines from the brow you have a sense of perfect security; there is not even an appearance of danger; and yet, if the whole depth below were one precipice, the effect could not be grander. At the foot is the cultivated valley, where the Glenderamaken, collecting the waters

of Blencathra from the north and east, winds along to join St. John's Beck, and form with it the Greta. In front are the Ullswater mountains. The Vale of St. John's and Nathdale open into the subjacent valley; you look over Nathdale fell, which divides them, and beyond it Leatheswater is seen, in its length, extending between Helvellyn and its own fells. Derwentwater is to the right of this, under the western side of those fells, and the semicircle is every where closed by mountains, range behind range. My friend, William Westall, who has seen the grandest and the loveliest features of nature in the East Indies and in the West, with the eye of a painter, and the feeling of a poet, burst into an exclamation of delight and wonder when I led him to this spot.

From Linthwaite Pike, which is the highest point of Blencathra, keeping along the brow, you pass in succession the points called Lilefell, Priestman and Knott Crag. They who perform the whole excursion on foot, may descend from hence, in a south-westerly direction, to the Glenderaterra, cross that rivulet by a wooden bridge, and return to Keswick through Brundholm wood, by a very beautiful road, commanding views of the Greta in its manifold windings below, and, farther on, of the town,

the lake, and the whole line of mountains from the Borrodale fells to Withop. But for women, and those from whom time has taken the superfluous strength of youth, it is better to be provided with carriages to the point where the ascent is commenced, and to rejoin them at the village of Threlkeld, descending, after they have passed Knott Crag, upon that village by a green shepherds' path. The path is not immediately perceptible from the heights, but, by making toward the village, you come upon it, and on so steep a declivity it is a great relief. Threlkeld, when it is approached by the high road on either side, or from the Vale of St. John's, appears one of the least agreeable of our villages; it presents no character of amenity or beauty, and seems rather to be threatened* by

* Blencathra is indeed at times an ill neighbour to this poor village. Waterspouts are either more frequent there, or from their effects have been more frequently observed, than on any other of our mountains, except it be Helvellyn, on the side of the Vale of St. John's. When they break, the houses are deluged, the fields covered with stones and gravel, the bridges sometimes blown up, and the road rendered impassable. Some years ago I went to the village on the day after one of these Bursts, as they are significantly called. The people were clearing their houses of the wreck which had been deposited there by the water in its passage, and all the furniture from the lower rooms was set out in the street, as if there had been

the mountain, than sheltered by it. Very different is its appearance when you descend upon it from Highrow-fell by this green and pleasant path. Then, indeed, the village is beautiful; not merely as a habitable human spot, the first which we reach upon issuing from some wild and uncultivated solitude, but in itself, and its position. The mountain, as thus seen, appears to protect and embosom it; in front there is the cheerfulness and the fertility of the open valley; old sycamores extend their deep shade over some of the long low-roofed outhouses; there is the little chapel to compleat the picture, and sanctify, as it were, the scene; and there is the music of the mountain stream, accompanying the latter part of the descent, in unison with all the objects, and with the turn of mind which those objects induce.

Here was the family seat of that good Sir Lancelot Threlkeld, who, after John Lord Clifford (the Clifford of Shakespere's dramas) was slain at Ferrybridge, and his lands seized, and

a general distress. Three parallel channels had been formed on the slope of the great buttress (Hall-fell) where the cloud discharged its whole weight of waters; and these were from five to six feet deep, and eighteen wide. We knew at Keswick that a waterspout had fallen in this direction, because the Greta had risen suddenly, and was unusually discoloured.

his posterity attainted by the triumphant House of York, married his widow, Margaret Bromflett, Baroness Vesey, and was, as the records of the family say, “ a very kind and loving husband to her,” helping her to conceal her two sons. The youngest was sent beyond sea, and died, while yet a child, in the Low Countries. Henry, the elder, who was about six or seven years old when his father was killed, “ she committed to the care of certain shepherds whose wives* had served her, which shepherds and their wives kept him concealed sometimes at Lonsborrow in Yorkshire, (which was part of her inheritance,) and sometimes in Cumberland, (here among these mountains,) and elsewhere, for the space of almost four-and-twenty years.” There he was bred up as a shepherd’s boy, “ in a very mean condition,” and thus “ miraculously preserved,” for, “ had he been known to be his father’s son and heir, he would either have been put in prison, or put to death, so odious was the memory of his father for killing the young

* “ Which shepherds’ wives had formerly been servants in that family, attending the nurse that gave him suck, which made him, being a child, more willing to submit to that mean condition ; where they infused into him the belief that he must either be content to live in that manner, or be utterly undone.”

Earl of Rutland, and for being such a desperate commander in battle against the House of York.

The Shepherd Lord was the happiest of his race ; and, falling upon peaceful times after his restoration, was enabled to indulge the peaceful and thoughtful disposition which his early fortunes had produced.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie ;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead ;
Nor did he change ; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales and every cottage hearth ;
The Shepherd Lord was honoured more and more :
And ages after he was laid in earth,
“ The Good Lord Clifford ” was the name he bore.

Wordsworth.

His history is not more remarkable in itself, than in the contrast which it affords to that of his ancestors, so many of whom had rendered themselves eminent by their activity and their ability in turbulent times. The property which they possessed in this part of England was ori-

ginally granted by William the Conqueror to one of the Norman Chiefs, Ranulph de Meschiens, who married William's niece, the sister of Hugh Lupus. From his sister it descended to Hugh de Morville, one of the murderers of Thomas-a-Becket, and having been forfeited in consequence of that crime, was granted by King John to Robert de Veteripont, who was the son of Morville's sister: "the favour of that king, and the marriage of Idonea* his wife, (who was a great heiress,) and his own industry, (for he was of an active knowing spirit,) were the three steps which raised his fortunes to the height they attained." He was, indeed, one of the most distinguished men of his age, and to him Appleby and Brough, with all their appendages, and the Sheriffwick of Westmoreland, were granted in perpetuity. He died in peace, at a good old age, a rare fortune for men of his station in those days; his son also came to a natural death, dying young; the grandson fell in battle on the side of Simon de Montfort, either at Lewes or at Evesham, and thus the estates escheated a second time to the Crown. They

* It is upon a later personage of the same family that Fuller in his quaint way remarks, "the first and last I meet with of that Christian name, though proper enough for women, who are to be '*meet helps*' to their husbands."

were restored to his two daughters, one of whom dying without issue, they past in marriage with the other to the Cliffords, who in consequence removed from the Wye to the* Eden. The Cliffords took their English appellation from their castle upon the Wye; they were descended from the dukes of Normandy, and already the story of Rosamond had given a romantic celebrity to the name. The first of the family, who settled in Westmoreland, built the greater part of Brougham Castle; he was surprized in Hawarden Castle by the Welsh Prince David, and taken prisoner, being mortally wounded. His son and successor fell at Bannockburn.

Roger Lord Clifford, who came next in succession, had the worse fortune, according to the Chroniclers, of being drawn and hanged at York; but in good company, and in no discreditable cause, the other persons who suffered at that time being John Lord Mowbray, and Sir Gosein d'Eeuill. There are few old family trees, especially of the coronet-bearing kind, which have not a pendant from some of their branches: but though this Roger had done as much to deserve the honours of political mar-

* "Some back friends to this country," says Fuller, "will say that, though Westmoreland hath much of Eden, (running clear through it,) yet hath it little of delight therein."

tyrdom as any other bold baron of that rebellious age, the Chroniclers are certainly mistaken in saying that he attained a consummation so devoutly to be deprecated. A feeling of humanity such as is seldom read of in civil wars, and especially in those times, saved him from execution, when he was taken prisoner with Lancaster and the rest of his confederates at Boroughbridge. He had received so many wounds in the battle, that he could not be brought before the judge for the summary trial, which would have sent him to the hurdle and the gallows. Being looked upon, therefore, as a dying man, he was respited from the course of law; time enough elapsed, while he continued in this state, for the heat of resentment to abate, and Edward of Caernarvon, who, though a weak and most misguided prince, was not a cruel one, spared his life; . . an act of mercy which was the more graceful, because Clifford had insulted the royal authority in a manner less likely to be forgiven than his braving it in arms. A pursuivant had served a writ upon him in the Barons' Chamber, and he made the man eat the wax wherewith the writ was signed, "in contempt, as it were, of the said king."

He was the first Lord Clifford that was attainted of treason. His lands and honours were

restored in the first year of Edward III., but he survived the restoration only a few weeks, dying in the flower of his age, unmarried ; but leaving “ some base children behind him, whom he had by a mean woman who was called Julian of the Bower, for whom he built a little house hard by Whinfell, and called it Julian’s Bower, the lower foundation of which standeth, and is yet to be seen,” said the compiler of the family records, an hundred and fifty years ago, “ though all the walls be down long since. And it is thought that the love which this Roger bore to this Julian kept him from marrying any other woman.” Poets, this story is for you ; the marriage of the brother who succeeded to his titles and estates contains something for the antiquaries. His wife, Isabella de Berkeley, was sister to Thomas Lord Berkeley, of Berkeley Castle, in which castle, two years after it had rung with “ shrieks of death,” when the tragedy of Edward II. was brought to its dreadful catastrophe there, the marriage was performed. She had for her portion a thousand pounds and fifty marks, to be paid by three equal instalments in three years, and secured to her by recognizance, “ toward the raising of which portion her brother levied aid of his freeholders.” Her wed-

ding apparel was “ a gown of cloth of bruny scarlett, or brown scarlett, with a cape furred with the best miniver, Lord Berkeley and his lady being, for the honour of the said bride, apparelled in the like habit. And the bride’s saddle, which she had then for her horse, cost five pounds in London.”

This Robert lived a country life, and “ nothing is mentioned of him in the wars,” except that he once accompanied an army into Scotland. It is however related of him, that when Edward Balliol was driven from Scotland, the exiled king was “ right honourably received by him in Westmoreland, and entertained in his Castles of Brougham, Appleby and Pendragon;” in acknowledgment for which hospitality Balliol, if he might at any time recover the kingdom of Scotland out of his adversaries’ hands, made him a grant of Douglas Dale, which had been granted to his grandfather who fell in Wales. The Hart’s-horn tree in Whinfell park, well known in tradition, and in hunters’ tales, owes its celebrity to this visit, though the tale* which

* That “ they ran the stag by a single greyhound out of Whinfell Park to Red Kirk in Scotland, and back again to this place, when, being both spent, the stag leaped over the pales, but died on the other side... and the greyhound, attempting to leap, fell, and died on the contrary side.” In memory of

belongs to it is, beyond all doubt, apocryphal. The horns were nailed up in the tree in honour of the royal guest who had seen the animal killed there; and there they remained more than three centuries, “growing, as it were, naturally in the tree,” till, in the year 1648, one of the branches was broken off by some of the army, and, ten years afterwards, the remainder was taken down by some mischievous people secretly in the night; “so now,” says the Countess of Pembroke, noticing this act of mischief in her Diary, “there is no part thereof remaining, the tree itself being so decayed, and the bark of it so peeled off, that it cannot last long; whereby we may see Time brings to forgetfulness many memorable things in this world, be they ever so carefully preserved, for this tree with the Hart’s horn in it was a thing of much note in

this fact the stag’s horns were nailed upon a tree just by, and, the dog being named Hercules, this rhyme was made upon them:

Hercules killed Hart a-greese,
And Hart a-greese killed Hercules.

Nicolsonn and Burn remark, when they tell the story, that a course to Nine Kirks, instead of into Scotland, might be far enough, from some parts of the park, for a greyhound to run. But the tale is of later invention than the Countess’s time; she simply says, that the King hunted the stag to death, . . and certainly he would not have hunted him into Scotland.

these parts." And then, according to her custom of applying scripture on all occasions that any way touched her, she refers to the third chapter of Ecclesiastes.

Roger had remained unmarried, because his illicit connection with a woman of low birth had produced a true and faithful love. Robert lived seventeen years with the wife, whose bridal magnificence was thought worthy of being described in the records* of the Berkeley family; and his high-born widow married again so soon after his decease, that the second husband, Sir Thomas de Musgrave, paid into the Exchequer a fine of £200, for the trespass which he had committed in marrying her; it being forbidden by the canon law, then much in use in England, to remarry *intra annum luctûs*, without a special dispensation from the Sovereign. His eldest son, at the age of sixteen, fought with the Black Prince when he won his spurs at Cressy; he died, as is supposed, in France, without issue, leaving a brother to succeed him. This brother, Roger Lord Clifford, "was accounted one of the wisest and gallantest men of all the

* "All which particulars are cited by Mr. — Smith's book of the records of the Lord Berkeley, in written hand, which he faithfully collected out of the records of that Castle, and out of the Tower of London."

Cliffords of his race, by the consent of those antiquaries that knew most of the story of England, and have seen most of the records and leger books thereof." He was often in the wars, both in France and in Scotland; he repaired the ancient castles which had been the seats of his forefathers; he left a greater estate in lands than most of them; and he was the longest possessor of those lands of any before him, or after him, till the Shepherd Lord. It was his fortune, also, to be the first Lord Clifford of Westmoreland and Skipton, that ever lived to be a grandfather. He obtained from Edw. III. two weekly markets and two fairs in the year for the town of Kirkby Stephen. His wisdom was shown in keeping himself free from troubles during those troublesome times at the latter end of King Edward III.'s reign, and in the beginning of King Richard II.'s.

His eldest son, Thomas, was less prudent; he was one of Richard II.'s loose favourites, and in consequence fell into such displeasure with the Parliament, that he was in the number of those persons who were banished from the Court, and proscribed from the King's service;.. a great grief to his father, who died presently after this disgrace. The son survived him little more than two years; impatient of inaction, and probably with the hope, also, of redeeming

his character in a holy war, he went to fight against the Pagans in what was then called Spruce, and was there slain,* leaving an infant son. That son deserved and enjoyed the good opinion of Henry V., and held the office of Butler at the coronation of his Queen. He was bound by articles to carry over to the French wars two hundred men-at-arms, consisting of three knights, forty-seven esquires, and an hundred-and-fifty archers; one-third of them on foot, the rest horsemen; the knights were to be allowed two shillings a-day, the esquires one, the archers sixpence, Clifford himself four shillings. In the flower of his age he was slain there, at the siege of Meaux, by a quarrel from a crossbow. Then ensued the civil wars, in which the old Lord Clifford, so called† when

* His father-in-law, Lord Ross, crusading in a different direction, died the same year, on his return from the Holy Land, “in the city of Paphos, in the isle of Cyprus.”

† To the mistake, into which this has misled Shakspeare, we are indebted for a beautiful passage :

“ Wast thou ordain’d, dear father,
To lose thy youth in peace, and to achieve
The silver livery of advised age ;
And in thy reverence, and thy chair-days, thus
To die in ruffian battle?”

The old play, which Shakspeare follows, calls him

“ aged pillar of all Cumberland’s true house,”

but has not the farther inaccuracy of representing him as hav-

only forty years of age, because he had a son who was in the field, fell at St. Albans; and that son, to whom Shakspeare has given a worse renown than he* deserves, at Ferry-bridge.

How often must that sweet strain of melancholy reflection, which Shakspeare has so beautifully expressed for Henry VI., have past through the mind of the Shepherd Lord, in his humble state, when thinking of his ancestors, and comparing his own consciousness of perpetual danger† with the security of his low-born associates!

ing grown old in peace. This Lord Clifford was far from having past a peaceful youth. He had done "brave service in the wars in France, at the assault and taking of the strong town of Ponthoise, when and where he and his men were all clothed in white by reason of the snow, and in that manner surprised the town. He also valiantly defended the same town against the assaults then and there given by the French King Charles VII."

* Rutland was in his eighteenth year, and barbarous as it was to refuse him quarter, there is a wide difference between killing a youth of that age in the field, and butchering a boy of twelve years old. Hall has misled Shakspeare and the author of the old play here.

† Cromwell had this feeling. "I can say in the presence of God," said he in one of his speeches, "in comparison of whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth, I would have been glad to have lived under my wood side, to

“ O God ! methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain ;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run ;
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours bring about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times ;
So many hours must I tend my flock ;
So many hours must I take my rest ;
So many hours must I contemplate ;
So many days my ewes have been with young ;
So many weeks ere the poor fools will yearn ;
So many months ere I shall shear the fleece ;
So minutes, hours, days, weeks, and months and
years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.”

have kept a flock of sheep, rather than have undertook such a government as this is !” Mr. Towell Rutt (to whom English history is indebted for the publication of Burton's Journal) calls this “ one of the Protector's favourite common-places.” I do not doubt that Oliver Cromwell often felt as he then expressed himself, and that the tears, which accompanied the expression, came from a deeper source than hypocrisy can reach.

PART II.

PRIVILEGED ORDERS.—THE AMERICAN
GOVERNMENTS.

I HAD passed upon Blencathra one of those days which provide a pleasure for remembrance, till time and mortality, in their sure course, sadden our blithest recollections. Our talk had been of the Shepherd Lord and of his house; and I was still ruminating upon the history of that family, and the days in which a noble birth so frequently led to a violent death, when Sir Thomas entered the room, and put an end to my musings. The change of times, said I, has been favourable in all respects to one class of men at least: our nobles enjoy all the advantages of their rank in this age, without any of the dangers which formerly environed it. Their rivalry with each other expends itself at elections, where they bleed in purse instead of person; engage in political parties or factions as passionately as they will, their stake extends not now beyond an official appointment, or a feather in the cap; and none among them for

the last three generations can even have dreamt of leaving his head upon Temple Bar to be looked at for a halfpenny through a spy-glass*; .. or of being buried with it under his arm.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And yet in these your days, noble and royal heads, which were as little troubled on their pillows with such anticipations before the danger surrounded them, have been laid under the engine! Pestilences of every kind, Montesinos, even when they move slowly, travel far; and their morbid principle, though it may long lie dormant, quickens into sudden and fatal activity at last. This plague began near at hand, .. close upon your shores. Ucalegon's house has been burnt, .. it is smoking still, and the sparks have been carried among your combustibles and dry timber! "Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" States have their seasons of tranquillity, and that with which this kingdom has been blest has been of unusual duration; but no state will ever be secure from political tragedies till that kingdom come, for the coming

* "I have been this morning," says Horace Walpole, "to the Tower, and past under the new heads at Temple Bar, where people make a trade of letting spying-glasses at a halfpenny a look."—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 151.

of which children are taught to offer up their daily prayers, but for which the institutions of society seem little calculated to prepare the way. Half a century ago the British constitution was an object of admiration, or of envy, to other nations, wherever its true character was understood, or its effects perceived. Then also it was the pride, the boast, the peculiar and proper glory of the British people, that they lived under such a constitution, . . . that they were blessed, above all nations, with a form of government, in which political freedom and legitimate authority were united, . . . that they were born to an inheritance of civil and religious liberty. Is it at this time held in such estimation, either by foreigners, or among yourselves?

MONTESINOS.

With the wise and the thoughtful it is not less valued, either abroad or at home, than it has been at any time since, under the especial blessing of Providence, it settled, after so many struggles, and such imminent danger, into its existing state.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The wise and the thoughtful ! . . . what proportion, think you, do these bear to the multitude? Or in what age or country is it that they have ever acted upon their own generation, other-

wise than to appeal to posterity against it? In what estimation is this mixed government held by the stirring spirits of the world? by your talking and your writing population, .. your sophists and sciolists, .. the blind who lead the blind, .. and those whom the Prince of this World (their Jupiter) dementates? Are these people, .. and their name is Legion, .. English at heart? Or is it not true of the many, or the most, that they are eager to begin the work of demolition, .. a craft in which any one may commence master, without having served an* apprenticeship, though not without danger of bringing down an old house upon his head? .. for in offences of this nature retribution follows righteously, close upon the crime!

MONTESINOS.

A new government has been constituted in a new country, under new circumstances, and consequently upon a different platform; and to this they look, like the Puritans of old to Geneva, as to their pattern in the Mount. They take its permanence for granted, and rea-

* *Al descomponer cada uno es maestro.* Columbus says this in the account of his last voyage. (Navarrete. *Coleccion de los Viages*, &c. vol. i. p. 310.) Perhaps it is a proverb which he uses.

son upon the assumption as a matter which admits of no dispute,* though its duration is yet some twenty years short of the natural age of man! Such governments, however, which now spring up like mushrooms in the new world, possess one obvious advantage over our more complicated forms; they build up little, and therefore have little that can be overthrown, through whatever revolutions they may pass.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The supposed advantage, methinks, is such as they who dwell in tents may be said to enjoy in comparison with those who inhabit cities. An earthquake finds nothing to destroy among them; and if a storm loosen their poles, tear

* "Intelligent foreigners," says Dr. Dwight, "who have made such inquiries as were in their power, and gained some knowledge of our system of government; who see it in theory more liable to fluctuation than any other, and yet are obliged by facts to acknowledge, that it is one of *the most stable and unchanging in the world*; are astonished and perplexed at this strange contradiction." (*Travels in New England and New York*, vol. i. p. 288.) This very intelligent, and for the most part, judicious writer, has forgotten that he himself was some twenty years older than the government, of whose stability and immutability he boasts!

The Life of General Hoche, by Alexandre Rousselin, is dedicated *A La Republique Eternelle*,...the republic being at that time in the sixth year of its age!

the tent-cords out of the sand, and blow down the whole *dou-war*, they have only to crawl out from under the curtains, and pitch it again as soon as the wind has ceased. The Scenitæ have certainly had this advantage over the ancient Egyptians, and the Greeks and Romans of antiquity;...a worshipful pre-eminence it is! But such as it is, it is to be enjoyed only by those who dwell in *dou-wars* or *kraals*. Civilization, polity, urbanity, are terms which denote their relation to a more advanced state of society, and this may be brought down by revolutions to as low and loathsome a state as that of the Barbary Moors, or the Abyssinian Christians. Lay your foundations in the rock, and let your edifice be compact and well-proportioned; then, though the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat, and the stream bear upon it, it will not fall: nothing but an earthquake can overthrow it;...and if, by some such convulsion in the order of nature, as by Providence appointed, it be overthrown at last, it is something at least to leave ruins for posterity!

MONTESINOS.

In a certain sense men may be said to lose that, which, having within their power, they fail to gain. Much the new Governments, or

rather fabrics of society, must undoubtedly lose in not possessing some of those institutions which they seem agreed to reject. But they have hardly had a choice. Old forms of government are not transplantable into new countries.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

If the Greeks and Romans had been of that opinion, Europe would at this day have been more barbarous than it is.

MONTESINOS.

But the Greeks and Romans never established themselves in new countries. They planted armed colonies; they went as conquerors, not as occupants. To their colonists, therefore, military discipline was necessary for self-preservation; and civil order took its place under that protection.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The whole of America was, in one sense of the term, a new country, when it was discovered, and taken possession of with a strong hand by the discoverers, upon an imaginary right which they devised for themselves. But in the sense wherein you use it; the term applies only to those parts which were inhabited by scattered tribes, . . . savages, whom it was hardly possible to conquer or to tame. War

with them resembled a contest* with wild beasts for possession of the forest ; and by any ordinary means or agencies of civilization they were not to be reclaimed. In such countries where the forest is to be cleared, and the savages who roam over it are to be hunted beyond the pale, the colonists have to carry with them not only the rudiments, but also the materials of society, and those materials are necessarily scanty, and, for the most part, bad of their kind. Natural wants leave them no leisure for the refinements of life, and the mere animal importance of individual man is such, that artificial distinctions are not maintainable among them. When such colonists occupy a sea-port, they are kept by means of commercial intercourse up to a certain degree of civilization,

* This was well represented by the Marquis de Dénonville in a despatch from Canada to the French Government, written in 1688. “ *En parlant de la guerre des Sauvages, il dit, qu'on ne peut en donner une plus juste idée, que de représenter ces Barbares comme des Bêtes farouches, qui sont répandues dans une vaste Forêt, d'où ils ravagent tous les Pays circumvoisins. On s'assemble pour leur donner la chasse, on s'informe où est leur retraite, et elle est par tout ; il faut les attendre à l'affût, et on les attend lontems. On ne les peut aller chercher qu'avec des chiens de chasse, et les Sauvages sont les seuls Levriers dont on puisse se servir pour cela.*”—Charlevoix, *Hist. de la Nouvelle France*, t. ii. p. 379.

but it is the lowest degree. If there be a well-rooted principle of religion among them, it acts as a strong corrective, so long as they remain together; but among those who branch off and disperse into the interior, where the rituals of social religion can no longer be observed, that only preservative fails; and they fall into a state, which, if it be in some respects better than that of the wild-men whom they displace, is in other respects as certainly worse.

MONTESINOS.

Such has been the history of the Dutch in South Africa, of the Spaniards in the Llanos, in the interior of La Plata, and in Paraguay, wherever, indeed, in their wide American possessions, they found none but savages to contend with; and such, also, is the state of the Brazilians in their grazing provinces. Among a people in this condition, the propensity is towards a popular government, weak in its seat and centre, and altogether inefficient at a distance. Whatever may be the nominal government under which they live, the state in which such people exist differs little from mere anarchy. Some admitted rules are followed among them in the devolution and distribution of property; in other respects laws are regarded

no farther than as the observance may coincide with their inclination or convenience.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But there were parts of the New World where the Spaniards found regular governments, complicated systems of society, and established habits of principled subordination, which had been artfully inculcated, and were well rooted in the feelings of the people. In those countries they found no tendency toward democratical institutions, and certainly they carried none with them when they settled there. Yet such institutions are adopted in Bogota, Peru, and Mexico, as well as at Buenos Ayres and Caraccas, as if, wherever society were fused by the revolutionary fire, it took this form; whether it be that into which it will finally settle after cooling, time will show. In those countries a monarchical government might seem more congenial to old customs, old opinions, and the condition of the people at the time when the flames reached them.

MONTESINOS.

Had the Spaniards effected their American conquests in independent armies, like the northern nations who established themselves by arms throughout the Western Empire, monar-

chies would have taken root in parts of the New World as naturally as they had done in the Old. The victorious leader would have taken the place of the Potentate whom he had thrust from the throne; and Cortes, Pizarro, Quesada and Federman, might have been the Hengist and Cerdic, the Alaric and Clovis, of so many dynasties. But the Spaniards carried with them a stronger principle of loyalty to their sovereign, and attachment to their country, than might have been expected from such adventurers; and when the attempt to establish an independent state was made in Peru, under the most favourable circumstances, the King's name was found to be a tower of strength by those who adhered to it. Perhaps this has not been fortunate either for the conquered kingdoms, or for the mother country. Perhaps it might have been better for Mexico, if Cortes had seated himself in the place of Montezuma, and for Peru if the younger Almagro, or Giron, had made Cuzco the metropolis of a revived kingdom. In that case the two nations would long ere this time have been united, and that fatal enmity of casts and colours would have been prevented, which has produced so great injustice, and so much misery at all times, and has cost so much blood in the present genera-

tion. But no local and present monarchy having grown up in the transition of power from one race to another, all things have since tended to alienate the minds of the American Spaniards from such a government. To them it has been for the purposes of oppression, a terrible reality; for the purposes of protection and beneficence, a phantom. Thus when the hour of revolution came, they were found in a condition utterly indisposed for monarchy, and as utterly unfit for any other form of government, having neither materials from which an aristocracy might be built up, nor a democracy composed with any reasonable prospect of stability for the state, or of repose for the miserable people.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Grievous, indeed, must have been the misgovernment of the Mother Country, which has rendered its colonies thus at the same time impatient of foreign dominion, and incompetent to the task of governing themselves!

MONTESINOS.

Our colonists were not found in that state when the plague, which is now devastating Spanish America and threatening Brazil, broke out among them.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

A plague you justly call it, ..of all plagues the most formidable that has ever yet been poured out from the vials of wrath! Yet how easily might all this evil have been averted by moderation and patience, both from the British and the Spanish-American colonies! There is a natural unfitness in distant dominion, when it ceases to be necessary for the support and protection of a growing state. This is so evident a truth, that no government, which is not in a state of barbarous ignorance, can fail to perceive it, however reluctant it may be to allow that the natural term of pupilage has expired. But no reluctance can long delay the recognition; for it becomes necessary, as soon as it manifestly appears to be just. In a due course of policy the Mother Country would withdraw its superintendence from an adult colony, just as a nation recalls its cautionary troops from fortresses which they have occupied in a friendly territory, when the cause for that provisional occupation is at an end. The state of tutelage and dependence thus terminating would be succeeded by an alliance, nearer in its kind, and more durable, than any which is grounded upon treaties, with whatever adjurations ratified, and by whatever motives of mutual interest

cemented. The connection of Great Britain with what are now the United States of America would, ere this time, have thus matured, had not a convulsion, which ended in a violent disruption, been brought on by the old leaven of puritanism in the colonies, and by the heat and profligacy of faction at home, at least as much as by the erroneous measures of the government. Well had it been if the mischief had terminated with the struggle! The Americans, like the English, are a sober people, and the mispolicy on either side, which should prevent the close relationship between the two nations, from yet producing its proper and beneficent effect upon both, would deserve rather to be called wicked than weak. But an evil principle has triumphed. The doctrine of obedience for conscience sake has been renounced in the one country, and seems too surely as if it were practically abandoned in the other, though it is the Christian doctrine, and that upon which alone the peace and happiness of society can rest. The example which was thus set them, has been followed by the Spanish-Americans with fatal fidelity. They, indeed, had real grievances to render them discontented under a dependence, which was made galling by every kind of vexatious and

contumacious injustice. But when the course of events would surely and speedily have brought about, without a struggle, their virtual independence and actual emancipation,..when those injurious restrictions must of necessity have ceased, which, having once ceased, it would not have been possible for the Mother Country ever to re-impose,..just at that time the revolutionary spirit broke loose. All the crimes which have been committed among them, all the calamities which they have endured, the blood which has been shed like water, the desolation of families, the miseries in which a whole generation has been involved,..might have been spared, and they would at this hour have possessed, in peace and prosperity, every privilege which they ought to have desired, or which they were capable of enjoying, if they could have been contented* to “ tarry the Lord’s leisure.”

* Patience, however, is not recommended by the directors of public opinion in Great Britain. One of them says: “ Patience never did any good in this world, and never will. We must fight for all that is valuable ; and as it is a condition of our existence that rest can only be enjoyed after labour, so in like manner we can have no good without a struggle... John Bull must be constantly poked in the ribs.” This is the advice given, in what may be called Captain Rock’s Journal, to the Irish Papists !

MONTESINOS.

So it is that men in their impatience convert to their bane that which, if seasonably received, would be their blessing. Like children who gather green fruit, they do not feel, and will not be persuaded to perceive that

...Time is Nature's faithful messenger,
And brings up all we wish, as well as all we fear.*

Dearly are the Spanish colonists at this day abiding the consequences of this error, and dearly will they long abide it! The consumption of lives has been more than tenfold the sum of that in the American war; and now, when Spain is no longer able to support the distant contest, they are left with all the principles of discord among themselves in full activity. The best men, as in such times they always are, have been the earliest victims. Are legislators and rulers likely to be found among those who, by means of a craftier course of conduct, or the exertion of more daring qualities, have survived the struggle, . . . men whose hearts have been seared by their own sufferings, or hardened, if not by the crimes which they have actually committed, by those which they have witnessed, and in which they

* Defoe.

have been inevitably, perhaps unwillingly, engaged,.. which they have been compelled to sanction,.. and by which they have profited?

'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor, who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees,
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business; these are the degrees
By which true sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True power doth grow on.*

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The reason is sufficiently manifest wherefore a preference for republican institutions should hitherto have been shown throughout the whole of these new states. There was neither family nor person in any of them to whose claims the general opinion would have deferred; and there was the example of their northern neighbours, whose prosperity they would consider to be the consequence of their popular government, not knowing for how much the Americans are indebted to the habits and principles in which they had been educated, and which they derived

* Wordsworth.

from their original stock, Dutch, or Swedish, as well as British. But this preference among the Spanish-Americans has not even the prejudice of a classical education to support it. After an age of anarchy, men gladly submit to any government that offers them a prospect of tranquillity; and a successful commander may, for that reason, find that the public inclination coincides with his own ambition, if he wishes to make his authority permanent, and take to himself the title of King. The station may be, though perilous, the safest in which he can place himself; and monarchies may thus begin in the New World, as they did in the Old.

MONTESINOS.

The general disposition there, at present, seems decidedly against that form of government. Even in Canada there exists a strong feeling in favour of republican equality. For though by the constitution of that province, as determined in the Quebec Bill, the King may confer hereditary titles of honour, with the right annexed of a seat in the Legislative Council, no title with such a right has yet been conferred, during the course of half a century. Now surely it must have been the intention of the British Government, when that Constitution was framed, to strengthen itself thus cheaply

and naturally, by creating a colonial nobility; and the reason why this has not been done, can only be that some strong objection was apprehended from the state of popular opinion.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Perhaps persons have not been found there solicitous for such honours.

MONTESINOS.

Titles will always be objects of ambition when they are regarded as honours, even though mere honours, and of the lowest kind; surely still more in a case like this, where they would have carried with them hereditary influence, which is power.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The reason then, peradventure, may be, that fit subjects have not been found.

MONTESINOS.

That reason might be admitted if any intelligible principle of selection could be discovered in the promotion of aspirants to the peerage at home.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The English, Montesinos, have not as yet been remarkable either for the efficiency, or the wisdom of their colonial system. They send out adventurers of British mould and spirit, .. good clay, well-tempered, ..and by such men

rapid advances are made toward a certain kind of prosperity, under British protection, and with the aid of British capital. But how the foundations of a state should be laid, and what superstructure should be erected, seem to be questions upon which your colonial architects have bestowed little thought, and in which they have hitherto manifested but poor proficiency.

MONTESINOS.

I should rather expect, if things hold on in their apparent course for another century, or for half the time, that monarchies would be demolished in the Old World, than that they would be established in the New.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Allow something, my friend, for the contradictory principle in human nature; and you may then see cause for supposing that the same temper of mind which makes men discontented under one form of government, is likely to produce the same effect under another. There are certain dispositions which arrange themselves, as if instinctively, on the querulous or railing side: like the beautiful birds of the Spice Islands, they must fly against the wind, from whatever quarter it may blow. Such men will be royalists in America, for the same reasons which make them republicans in Eng-

land, France and Germany. A lawyer will argue with the whole force of his intellect and his lungs upon a much feebler case than may be made out in favour of either form; they may therefore easily persuade themselves that their opinions are built upon conviction, when in reality the root of the matter is to be found in a contentious humour, in the love of display, in the pleasure of opposition, and in that spirit of self-complacency, wherewith men, especially young men, are liable to be possessed, when they think themselves advanced in knowledge, and in liberality, beyond the institutions of their country. There are weeds which never show themselves in the wilderness, where the forest overshadows, or the brake chokes them with its stronger growth; but they spring up in the garden and the cultivated field, and become rank and noxious, in consequence of the very labour which man hath bestowed in preparing and manuring the ground. So it is with subjects such as these: they are most numerous, where there is most freedom;..of such discontent, therefore, there will be as much in the United States as in England.

MONTESINOS.

But it has not the means of acting there with

equal force. There is no metropolis* in the United States, no London, or Paris, no heart of the political body; nor can there be one while the federal system continues. That system resembles the banyan tree; its branches as they extend send down shoots, and form for themselves new trunks. An American poet might thus typify it; and if he looked to the emblem only, he might say that, in proportion to its extension, its strength must be increased, and its continuance secured; for the storm cannot uproot it, and there is no single life which the woodman can destroy.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Follow the emblem, and you will find that the banyan has no privilege of indestructibility. It may be consumed by fire; and though it cannot be thrown down by a tempest, it may

* "There can hardly," says Hobbes, (*Behemoth*, *Mor. and Pol. Works*, p. 549, Ed. 1750,) "arise a long and dangerous rebellion, that has not some such overgrown city (as London), with an army or two in its belly, to foment it." On the other hand the historian Niebuhr remarks, that unity is what "the nations of antiquity never attained, except by means of a predominant capital." (*Hare and Thirlwall's Trans.* vol. i. p. 87.) There is no probability that any such capital will be formed in the United States:.. by it their constitution would be endangered,..but can their union be maintained without one?

be shattered by it, and its polyped unity destroyed.

MONTESINOS.

Perhaps the truth may be, that republics, when once established, although more turbulent than monarchical states, are more stable ; and one cause for this may be, that where any end is in view which concerns their advantage, or their security, they are less scrupulous concerning the means. The more you divide responsibility, the less of it, morally as well as legally, will each of the persons among whom it is divided take unto himself. There is an *esprit de corps*, by which the point of honour is maintained at a high standard ; but there is no corporate conscience. And men who act in bodies, it matters not whether large or small, . . mobs, senates, or cabinets, . . will, without hesitation, take their share in measures, which, if proposed to any one of them as an individual, would make him reply with the Syrian, “ Am I a dog, that I should do this thing ? ”

If governments are to be appreciated by their stability, the Venetian should seem to have been the best that has ever been known in Europe. So it was esteemed by our republicans of the seventeenth century : yet if there be one government that has been systematically

conducted upon more abominable principles than all others, it is that of the Republic of Venice.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And therefore, Montesinos, it has fallen! Had Venice possessed the moral strength of Switzerland, it would not indeed have been more secure than the Swiss Cantons were found to be against such a military force as that of the French Republic; but the general feeling of Europe would have called for its restoration, and the shameless iniquity of its transfer, from the robber to the receiver, could not have been sanctioned in opposition to that feeling.

All things are always in change: and the example of Venice may show that, in a state where external mutation is least apparent, the process of internal decay may be going on the more surely and irremediably.

MONTESINOS.

But in the United States of America, however the affectation of opposition, and the love of display, may make a certain number of persons disparage the government which it is their duty to obey and to uphold, it is not the interest of any party or sect to attempt its overthrow.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

He who maintains that men are best directed by a sense of their own interest, should be pre-

pared to show that they always know what their own interests really are. The sense of duty is more influential in good men, envy, hatred, and malice, in wicked ones; prejudice in many, superstition in more, passion* in most men.

If governments understood their interest, would there be wars in the world? if individuals understood† it, would there be wickedness?

It is true that there is nothing to pull down in America; no temple for Erostratus to destroy. But the very levelness of the political platform may excite in some Pharaoh the ambition of constructing a pyramid upon it. Ambition, even if it be not the besetting sin of republics

* "Interest," said Glover the Poet, "is not the predominant ruler of mankind. The few, indeed, are under that frigid influence; but the many are governed by passion."—*Parliamentary History*, vol. xviii. p. 477.

† That good man, Louis Buonaparte, says, "*il est bien consolant de songer que l'intérêt réel des individus et des gouvernemens s'accorde parfaitement avec la morale; que le droit chemin est non seulement le plus court, mais encore le meilleur; qu'enfin la prospérité et le perfectionnement de la société sont inséparables.*"—*Documens Historiques sur la Hollande*, t. ii. p. 64.

But it is Christianity alone that can bring about this improvement.

more than of monarchies, acts in them, when once they are possessed by it, with greater force, and has fewer obstacles in its course. But so surely as ambition shall introduce a military spirit, the cradle will be made ready for an *Imperator*. Anarchy has a natural tendency to the same crisis; and in the new states what is to preserve the people from it? No provision is made for their religious instruction; they are left to take up at their choice with fanaticism, or unbelief;.. both existing there in such hideous forms, that it may almost be doubted which is most destructive to human happiness. In those states little more respect is paid to law than to gospel: as among the Jews when there was no king in Israel, every man does that which is right in his own eyes. A weak government cannot enforce obedience at a distance: a strong one cannot exist without establishments which the American people will not willingly support. Even in the best established states there is nothing which supplies, or can supply, the place of loyalty;* and

* “ Affection,” says Dr. Dwight, “ has for its proper object *intelligent beings*. The fewer these are, and the longer they are regarded with affection, the more intense and riveted the affection becomes. The great officers of this state (Connecticut) are few, and their continuance in office is usually

throughout the whole union the principle of religious obedience, which is the cement of political society, is wanting.

MONTESINOS.

They will tell you that none is needed for the Cyclopean walls of a republican edifice. And alas ! it may be feared that there is as little of that cement here.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Your fathers were not sparing of it when they

long. Hence they are customarily regarded by their fellow-citizens with no small degree of respect and personal attachment. Government in their hands is felt to be the government of friends ; and the attachment to the men is naturally associated with their measures.

“ The whole force of this affection does not, I confess, exist even here. For its entire efficacy we must look to a monarchy, army, or navy. The ruler here being a single object, concentrates the whole regard of the mind ; and if an amiable and worthy man, faithfully and wisely discharging the duties of his office, may exert an influence over those whom he governs next to magical. Of the benefits to which this powerful principle gives birth, free governments ought, in every safe way, to avail themselves. A doctrine, a constitution, or even an abstract term, may serve as a watchword of party, a torch of enthusiasm, or an idol of occasional ardour. But there is no permanent earthly object of affection, except man ; and, without such affection, there is reason to fear that no free government can long exist in safety and peace.”—*Travels in New England and New York*, vol. i. p. 262, (American Edition.)

laid the foundation, and raised the superstructure: . . . if their sons have suffered it to be picked out, let them beware of wind and weather! Governments are held together either by force, or by the attachment of the people to their institutions. Despotism begins generally in the choice, or willing acquiescence of the people, when they are weary of anarchy, and ask only for protection and repose. It is thus welcomed as the remedy for present evils; and when its own evil consequences begin to act, it is then upheld by force, and by the habit of obedience which force produces, a habit which frequently survives the power that generated it. But the willing obedience of a free people rests either on a principle of duty, as by religion enjoined, or upon general prosperity; that is to say, a condition of society in which the great body of the population shall be contented with their lot, and no such grievances, or discrepancies of opinion, shall exist, as to excite in any considerable part of them a desire for change. We will hereafter inquire how far these kingdoms may be deemed secure upon either of these grounds. In America the principle of religious obedience is not acknowledged; obedience, therefore, will be paid there no longer than it may be thought convenient to

pay it. And if a province remote from the seat of the central, or rather of the general government, should choose to separate itself from the confederacy, the elder states, in which the strength* and intelligence and virtue of the union are chiefly to be found, would find themselves, should they attempt to maintain the connection by force, much in the same kind of situation with respect to the new Independents, that the Mother Country was placed in towards them, as to the difficulties of the contest.

MONTESINOS.

The maxim of the first French Revolutionists might again have its season of triumph: for in such a case it would be found practically true that for a state to be independent, it is sufficient that it wills it.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But no such change could be brought about without bringing some popular leader conspicuously forward; and were he to obtain military

* In 1810 "two-fifths of the white population of the American Republic, its only real strength, were included in the northern states (New York and New England). Of these two-fifths, 2,350,000 occupy in a solid column a territory of less than 100,000 square miles; while the remaining three-fifths are spread over a surface of more than a million."—Dwight's *Travels in New England and New York*, vol. i. p. 20. (American Edition.)

reputation, monarchy might naturally arise, as it has in so many former instances arisen. It is not to be supposed that the same country should produce a second Washington. In any war, foreign or domestic, a successful Commander would be more dangerous in America, than he was ever deemed to be in the most jealous ages of the Roman Republic, or of the Athenian democracy. The Americans are an ambitious people, more ambitious than any other existing nation, . . the French, possibly, excepted. A General who should conquer Quebec for them, or take possession of Mexico, might pass from the Presidency to the Throne with as little opposition as Buonaparte, when he exchanged the title of Consul for that of Emperor, found from legislators who had sworn eternal hatred to monarchy. The change is easier from republicanism to monarchy in America, than from monarchy to republicanism in any of the European kingdoms, even those wherein there has been the most flagrant and pernicious misgovernment. A revolutionary party would have less danger to incur, less resistance to encounter, and greater objects of ambition to incite it.

MONTESINOS.

But there is no appearance of any disposition

to such a change. The foundations of government in that country have not been undermined.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There are none to undermine.

MONTESINOS.

All changes in society, even when indisputably for the better, (and this were far from being so,) are calamitous to the generation which is fated to pass through them: such only are to be desired as may be effected by the course of progressive improvement, gradually felt rather in the results than in the operation. I know not that such a revolution in America would eventually be for the welfare of the American people; immediately it would, beyond all doubt, be for their misfortune, elevating the turbulent and the daring, and sacrificing to their ambition the peace and happiness of the community. Too much of this has already been seen in this, my generation! They who lived (if any were then living) when the great convulsions of this planet, Neptunian or Vulcanian, were going on, are less to be pitied than those who are involved in the cataclasms of the moral and social world, inasmuch as it is more tolerable to suffer under the dispensations of nature, than the infliction of man. They were spared also from the foresight of evil, and from participating in the errors, the ill passions,

and the crimes, which, in the revolutions of society, bring indiscriminating destruction upon the innocent and the guilty.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

All governments, ancient and modern, have undergone such convulsions before the different orders of which they were composed settled each in its proper place. In modern history you have the struggle between the Civil and Ecclesiastical powers, and that between the Crown and the Nobles, the Papacy trimming between them, and siding with one or the other, as might best seem to promote its own haughty pretensions. These continued for some ages. Then came the contest between the Crown and the third estate, or the people properly so called. Take heed lest there be another, and a more tremendous one, at hand, between the Government and the Populace, .. more doubtful in its issue, and whatever that may be, more dreadful in its course, more fatal in its consequences!

MONTESINOS.

*Omnino res in ancipiti est, et benè quod nondum in præcipiti!** First the Sword governs; then the Laws; next in succession is the Government of Public Opinion. To this we are coming. Already its claims are openly and

* Scaliger.

boldly advanced, . . timidly, and therefore feebly, resisted !

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Say, rather, that its reign has begun. And to hope for tranquillity under it, is like putting to sea with a persuasion that, let the winds rage as they may, and blow from whatever quarter, they will have no action upon the waves !

MONTESINOS.

The more loudly* and confidently Public Opinion is expressed, with the more reason ought it always to be distrusted ! The more powerful it becomes, the more easily is it misled, and the more are its predominance and its tyranny to be dreaded.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The more resolutely, therefore, ought its usurpation to be resisted.

MONTESINOS.

But for this, earnestness and energy are wanting. Public life seems now to be

the stage

Where Hope and Youth shall ruin Fear and Age !†

* "The best and surest way," said Sir Benjamin Rudyard, "to dispel darkness and the deeds thereof, is to let in light. We say that day breaks, but no man ever heard the voice of it. God comes in the *still voice*."—Rushworth.

† Lord Brooke.

It was Cassandra's miserable curse to prophesy truly, but always to unheeding, unbelieving ears. There are those among us who have in like manner a strong and distinct foresight of the evils which are impending, but who await the course of events in silence and resignation, and spare themselves the pain of what they deem (sinfully as respects themselves, if not erringly as regards others) a useless exertion. On the other hand, they who mislead, and they who are misled, have confidence and intrepidity on their side. It is a true saying of Bishop Taylor's, and not less applicable to political than to religious opinions, that "men are most confident of those articles which they can so little prove, that they never made questions of them." Their zeal is in proportion to their confidence. Danton, one of the boldest and bloodiest demagogues that ever excited a deluded populace to acts of atrocity and madness, declared, in the successful part of his career, that the principle of revolutionary action was audacity in this, audacity in that, audacity in everything.

Be bold, be bold, and everywhere be bold !*

Most faithfully is that maxim followed, by all the members of the Unholy Alliance, from the

* Faëry Queen.

haughtiest of those whom Johnson called "our bottomless Whigs," to the lowest son of profligacy and misfortune, who in default of other occupation, as Roger North says, "takes into the treason trade." "To everything there is a season," saith the Preacher; and these men imagine that their season is come: that this is the time for them "to rend, and to break down, and to pluck up that which is planted; and to get and to keep."

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There was an age during which the Pulpit supplied, and in no inadequate degree, the place of the Press, in expressing public opinion, and in exciting and directing it. The Press at this day, though its efforts throughout Christendom were directed to one object, could not produce so powerful, and simultaneous a commotion, as was raised by the Preachers of the first Crusade. That movement coincided with the wishes of the rulers and the temper of the people. But France, Scotland, and England, have experienced what the tyranny of the Pulpit is, the former during the League, the two latter during the Covenant, the one being as much the reproach of Protestantism as the other is of the Romish Church. Widely as the professions of faith differed, the principle in

both confederacies was the same, and it was the same spirit that influenced them. The Press is more difficultly to be restrained; it acts more continuously as well as more widely; beware how you come under its tyranny! Nothing but good resulted to these kingdoms when that of the Pulpit was overthrown: but this can neither so effectually, nor so safely be put down. Of the many evils to which its abominable abuse must in sure consequence lead, if it be not firmly restrained in time, the ultimate loss of its just and salutary freedom is one of the worst, and likely to be the most enduring.

MONTESINOS.

Even in its beginnings it was found impossible to restrain it, though the severest means were tried.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Trust me, Montesinos, when I tell you, that had its abuses proceeded from no other motives than sheer profligacy and the desire of gain, the Tudors would have curbed it to their heart's content, and with the cordial acquiescence of the nation. It was put in action against the greatest of that line by enthusiasm, and religious faction. The men, therefore, whom it was necessary to restrain or to punish, were

persons who, under a fatal but invincible mis-persuasion, deemed it their duty to defy the laws, eluding them by every imaginable* artifice of concealment so long as they could, and, when this was no longer possible, exulting over them, and going to execution, I will not say with the spirit of martyrs, for the meekness and the charity were wanting, but with the resolution of soldiers who advance to meet death in the breach.

MONTESINOS.

The punishment in their case was proportioned to the apprehended and intended consequences of the offence, not to the pravity of the offender. Human laws, though necessarily imperfect, are more imperfect than of necessity they must be; but whenever they err, or are commonly thought to err, on the side of severity, they occasion a re-action against themselves.

* Ben Jonson describes in his lively manner the operations of a libellous press in his days.

One in his printer in disguise, and keeps
 His press in a hollow tree, where to conceal him
 He works by glow-worm light; the moon's too open.
 The other zealous rag is the compositor,
 Who, in an angle where the ants inhabit,
 (The emblems of his labours) will sit curl'd
 Whole days and nights, and work his eyes out for him.

vol. viii. p. 10.

The criminal who suffers under a sentence heavier than his crime, is thereby made an object of compassion ; and forthwith his actual criminality is forgiven, or overlooked. This is not because the eye* of pity sees things through a delusive medium, but because there is in us an instinctive principle which rises against injustice ; and laws not only fail in efficacy, but are always in some degree injurious, if they are not in accord with the sense of right and wrong, ..if they have not the sanction of natural justice, ..if they do not rest upon that primal and paramount law which God has implanted in the heart of man.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Lawcraft, if not a twin-fiend with Priestcraft, is an imp of the same stock, and perhaps the worser devil of the two. There may be other professions which harden the heart as much, but none which tend so greatly to corrupt the sincerity, to vitiate the moral sense, and to

* The afflicted ne'er want praises. Oh how false
Doth the eye of Pity see! The only way
To make the foul seem gracious, is to be
Within the ken of death. He that erewhile
Would have been thought a monster, being now
Condemned to die, is thought a hero.

Cartwright. The Royal Slave.

sophisticate the understanding. But this is wandering from the path. To return, therefore, to the stile where we came over;..Public opinion has in this country arrogated and obtained a greater degree of authority than is consistent with the public weal. It is deferred to and followed by those whose duty it is to controul it within just bounds, to see that it is duly instructed, and to guide it. This usurpation has been favoured by the changes which have been made in the fabric of your government,..changes by which both Houses of Parliament have been altered in their constitution, and both essentially for the worse. Some injury was done by the Unions with Scotland and with Ireland. Both were expedient and necessary measures; but they introduced into your legislature too large an admixture of persons who had not been trained up in English habits and feelings. This, you will reply, is an incidental evil, inseparable from a great good; but the increase of numbers is an uncompensated evil, making the lower House of Parliament resemble a popular assembly,* rather than a legislative body.

* "For my part," said Governor Johnstone, speaking in Parliament upon the disturbances in North America, "I think with Cardinal de Retz, that any number above one hundred is

MONTESINOS.

The members are not too many for the actual business of the House.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But they are far too many for its peculiar and proper business; much of the rest might as well, or better, be performed by a different machinery. If the House of Commons consisted at this time of half, or one-third of its present complement, every influential member would still be there: all who, by character, ability, station and stake in the country, are entitled to a place.

MONTESINOS.

This I believe. Cataline and Clodius would still have the same access; but the entrance would not be so easy for Thersites and Scapin.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The great additions, which have been made to the peerage during the last half century, have rendered this evil, great as in itself it is, much greater than it would otherwise have been. Indeed this modern practice, in what-

at best but a mere mob." (Here the House felt the expression as too strong.) "It never could be my intention," he proceeded, "to apply the rule to this House, long trained in form and discipline; though sometimes there are doctrines and proceedings even here, that would surprize a stranger into this belief."—*Parl. History*, vol. xviii. p. 258.

ever light it be considered, must be deemed impolitic. If it have not lessened the authority of the House of Peers, it has diminished the dignity of the peerage ; and in proportion as it has removed into that House from the Commons men of large property and corresponding influence, it has made room for persons to whom a voice in the momentous concerns of legislation cannot so safely be entrusted.

MONTESINOS.

This has been one of the great errors of latter times. Mr. Pitt* committed it to a great

* Sheridan, in the year 1797, touching in one of his speeches upon “ the lavish distribution of the peerage, asserted that no fewer than an hundred and sixty peers had been created since the commencement of the then existing administration.” He added, “ I once heard a member of this House say, that some persons were made peers who were not fitter for that honour than his groom ; but, unfortunately for me, I cannot call upon that gentleman to verify that fact here, for—he is now made a peer himself.”—*Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxiii. p. 90.

The Chinese have a law whereby “ officers of government are not allowed to solicit hereditary honours.” It is a severe one. “ When any officers of the civil department of government, who have not distinguished themselves by extraordinary and great services to the state, are recommended to the consideration of the emperor, as deserving of the highest hereditary honours ; such officers, and those who recommend them, shall suffer death, by being beheaded, after remaining the usual period in prison.”—*Penal Laws of China*, p. 52.

extent, and his successors have followed the ill example.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Cheap honours and cheap bread make other things cheap which cannot be held too dear. Continue to increase the peerage as you have increased it during the reign of George III., and the appellation of “my Lord” will not be worth much more to an Englishman’s ear in his own country, than it is in France.

MONTESINOS.

The peers under George I. endeavoured to prevent this evil, in consequence of the notorious creation made in the preceding reign. They proposed, that instead of the sixteen elective peers for Scotland, twenty-five, with hereditary seats, should be named for that kingdom; that not more than six should be added to the then existing* number of English peers, without precedent right; and that in those cases the peerage should be limited to the heirs male, in the direct line. But the number was to be kept full as vacancies occurred. The Bill was rejected in the lower House. It was unpopular, ..some pains having been taken to render it so. Steele wrote and spoke against it with effect;

* It was at that time (1719) 178.

and Walpole opposed it upon the grounds that it diminished the king's prerogative, gave to the aristocracy a preponderating power in the state, and took away from the people one of the most powerful incentives to public virtue. That objection might easily have been removed by making an exception for great public services ; it was however more specious than solid, for the course of nature occasions more vacancies than could be filled up in ordinary, or even in extraordinary times, by claimants upon that score. But the Bill as it was brought forward had an invidious appearance, and was therefore obnoxious to popular objections of that kind which can with most difficulty be overcome, because they appeal to prejudice and passion.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The evil, which it was intended thus to obviate, is one which may better be guarded against by usage resulting from clear views of policy, than by a positive statute.

MONTESINOS.

Usage unfortunately sanctions the abuse, sovereigns having injudiciously manifested their favour in this way, and ministers having been accustomed to gratify their private friends, and strengthen themselves by promotions otherwise as inexplicable as uncalled for. True it is that

the error was committed by princes more glaringly in earlier times, and in weak reigns. It was the special weakness of James I., who is otherwise generally entitled to the praise of sagacity, and always of good intentions. The ministerial abuse is of later growth.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There is a manifest unfitness in ennobling men who have no other pretensions than what they derive from their wealth; and there is an equal unfitness, and eventually a greater mischief, in conferring the peerage, when it is necessary to annex a pension for supporting it; for permanent property, adequate to his rank, ought to be the indispensable qualification for an hereditary legislator. But there are cases against which the door never should be closed; and whenever they occur, a sum equivalent to the value of the pension should be granted, and vested in an entailed estate. New nobility has in such cases a noble origin, far worthier indeed than that in which the oldest can have originated. And although great names may descend to unworthy representatives, the name which thus becomes a reproach to the bearer serves not the less for a national example, and a memorial of national gratitude. Regarding them as a body, your nobles are far from a degenerate

race; that they should not be so is some proof of the healthiness of your institutions, and of the strength also of the British character, considering how dangerous a great inheritance is to man's moral nature under any circumstances.

MONTESINOS.

They have long been more fortunately circumstanced than the nobility of other countries; having in the settlement of our political elements taken just that position which was safest for themselves, and most conducive to the preservation and stability of the general order.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

One considerable advantage they possessed in early times. For after the Normans and Saxons were formed into one nation, a kindlier feeling prevailed between the nobles and the people in this kingdom, than in France, or the Low Countries, or Germany. When the strength of the English armies lay in their archers, the French, well as they knew, and severely as they had been made to feel this, were nevertheless afraid to let the same class of men be trained to the use of the same weapons.

MONTESINOS.

Our peers are fortunate in having retained none of those invidious and odious privileges

which, wherever they are retained, must endanger the existence of the privileged order. The Court of Honour was too irrational, as well as too vexatious and obnoxious, to be re-established at the Restoration; and *scandalum magnatum* has become as obsolete an offence as the sin of witchcraft. That unchristian pride of caste, which is still found in some parts of the continent, is, Heaven be praised! as little to be discovered here, as the physical degeneracy which in other parts, where it is aided by dispensations for unnatural marriages, it has visibly produced. We pass for a proud nation among our neighbours, because they understand our manners as little as we accommodate ourselves to theirs: but pride is not one of our national vices. Our field of society is in a state of cultivation which will not allow that weed to grow. The growth of commercial wealth, the increase of our naval and military establishments, and the progress of education among the middle orders, have shaded the gradations of rank so imperceptibly into each other, that in this respect the social order has never been more happily constituted anywhere than it is here at this time.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Yet, Montesinos, there may be danger, lest

by the frequency of undeserved promotions to the peerage, the order itself should not merely lose something in public opinion, but something also of what ought to be its distinctive character, and by which alone its hold on public opinion can be maintained. There is a feeling of nobility which becomes a virtuous principle of action, and justifies the name of *noble*. That feeling, when it is fostered by national manners, survives under circumstances of political and intellectual degradation, and even of physical degeneracy, the standard of honour being kept to its mark, when other things have sunk. The faster you create peers, (always excepting those cases in which the coronet has been won,..for then the root is planted,) the less will there be of this, and the greater likelihood that mere haughtiness may grow up in its place.

MONTESINOS.

There are ways of forcing new wine, (as well as of encrusting new bottles,) by which it may acquire something like the ripeness, and obtain the full market price, of old. The heralds, if they cannot find a coat for Wealth, can furnish one, and produce a genealogy as long and as imposing as if it were authentic. But the feel-

ing of nobility can neither be created, nor purchased. There is indeed a nobility of Nature's own making, which may sometimes be seen in the lowest walks of life, just as that which is conventional may be found cased in a coarse clay, fit only for vessels of dishonour. Upon such a native temperament of mind and body this feeling grows best, as fruits acquire their finest quality when grafted upon a wild stock of their own kind. But, without this advantage, it is producible by culture: and in one who, being capable of understanding it, has been made to understand how large a debt he owes to his ancestors, and how deeply in consequence he stands bound to his posterity and his country, that knowledge, which may ennoble his youth and dignify his manhood, brings forth in declining life a melancholy sentiment, a sad wisdom, remote from pride, and indeed partaking of humility. Pride is a weed which grows more rankly on the dunghill of riches, than in the hot-bed of rank. But it is not the weed of a British soil.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Look to your words, my mortal friend! Is it your formed opinion that the sin of pride is less prevalent in England than in other coun-

tries? or was the assertion one of those which, when they have been made hastily, ought sometimes to be questioned at leisure?

MONTESINOS.

We have an author indeed who says that

—“Pride and Strife are natives of our soil,
Freeholders here.”

I would call him a poet if he had often exprest himself in verse so well. But Defoe had a perverse pleasure in disparaging his countrymen. One part of the reproach, which he thus brings against them, is certainly ill-founded; for though the English are unhappily a divided nation, and at all times more or less disturbed by factions, they are not a quarrelsome people. Whether the other charge can or cannot be better supported, I may at least affirm, that the most offensive manifestations of pride have never been known among us. Neither our laws, customs, or religion, recognize left-handed marriages: . . . here if cloth of gold be matched with cloth of frieze, all inequality is done away by the marriage bond, and husband and wife are one in the eyes of man, as they are in the sight of Heaven. Neither are we chargeable with the guilt of converting religion into an instrument of oppression, and devoting girls from their childhood to

imprisonment for life in a nunnery, that the wealth of the family may not be impaired by portioning them suitably in marriage, nor the family pride wounded by seeing them marry beneath their birth. For this indeed we are beholden to the Reformation, without which there might have been as many hard hearts found here as among our neighbours. But even the formalities of pride are not encouraged by our manners, ..not even tolerated by them. During no age of our history could the common form of greeting among the members of what is called a good family, have been as it was in a part of the North, “Welcome, proud Cousins!”* Nor have our “venerable ancient song-enditers” ever, like the old Danish poets, applied that epithet to a damsel otherwise than as conveying a reproach.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Beware how you allow words to pass with you for more than they are worth, and bear in mind what alteration is sometimes produced in their current value by the course of time. Remember also, that in countries, where the distinctions of ranks are jealously observed and tenaciously maintained, there prevails, never-

* Niebuhr’s History of Rome, N. 732.

theless, between master and servant an affability on the one side, and an attachment on the other, .. a freedom and a familiarity which bring them into kindlier sympathies than commonly exist between persons who stand in that relation to each other in England or in America. Ancient and acknowledged privileges have had in European society the effect of disarming pride, .. and in many instances of modifying it, or transmuting it into a virtue. The representative of an old family, who resides on the lands of his ancestors, and sees around him their portraits in his mansion, and their tombs in his parish church, is surrounded by hereditary attachments; he succeeds to their principles and feelings and duties as part of his inheritance, not less than to their honours and their wealth; as the Spaniards say *bebí obligaciones hidalgas en la sangre, y la leche*; the old tenants are as precious to him as the old trees on his estate, and the domestics have, as the name ought to imply, their home and resting-place in his service. There is little of this remaining in England, and all things are tending to wear out the little which is left. Less patronage is shown, because less may be wanted, or desired, or perhaps deserved; and yet the intellectual humi-

lity that courted patronage, and even abased itself sometimes in courting it, was better than that sort of independence which despises and defies it. You have in England a great deal of what may more truly be called the pride than the spirit of independence : and this pride, and the pride of wealth, and the pride of rank, act upon and provoke each other. There is less of the latter than of the others, .. much less ; and of the three kindred yet hostile vices, it is the least offensive ; the pride of independence is the most so, because it is suspicious, irritable, and ready to act aggressively upon the slightest pretext, or imaginary provocation.

MONTESINOS.

There is more of this in America than in England. It is a surly, ill-conditioned spirit, partaking less of pride than of envy, which is perhaps the commonest of all sins. Woe to the country wherein, during any suspension of the laws, or subversion of order, such a spirit of independence should obtain the ascendancy ! It would speedily show itself to be as intolerant of the real and tangible privileges of wealth as of nobility ; nor of these alone ; natural advantages, all such as are not merely animal, be-

come in such times as odious as artificial ones, and the levelling principle having once acquired ascendancy, renews the

———— work of Saturn, who with narrow spite
Mowed down the fat, and let the lean ears spring.

Lord Brooke.

When the poor clerk of Chatham thanked God for having been so well brought up that he could write his name, Jack Cade's mob condemned him by acclamation to be hanged with his pen and inkhorn about his neck, as one who had confessed himself a villain and a traitor. Jack Cade's declaration was,

We will not leave one lord, one gentleman ;
Spare none but such as go in clouted shoon !

and this principle was so far carried into effect during the paroxysms of revolutionary madness in France, that personal cleanliness was considered a mark of incivism, and clean linen became a crime.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You are speaking of insane times : for like as governments have their seasons of decrepitude and dotage, so may it appear that nations have their accesses of insanity and raging madness. With you such fits have, since the Restoration, served rather to disgrace the nation hitherto,

than seriously to disturb its peace, or endanger its safety. But the slow and silent changes of society, those which work unperceived till they are felt in their effects, have, while they facilitated the acquisition of rank and its attendant privileges, rendered its influence less beneficial. It is an incidental evil arising from your laws of inheritance...light when compared with the evils which result from the opposite system of gavelkind, yet in itself not inconsiderable. But when by marriage, or descent, distant estates are brought into the possession of one lord, old mansions fall to decay, old hearths grow cold, and hereditary attachments wither; the beneficent presence which should invigorate them being withdrawn. The proprietor may, perhaps, occasionally visit the seat of his ancestors; the bells then ring for his arrival, and there is a short season of revelry and joy: but the joy of former times was different in character and kind; the wholesome zest, the raciness, the vivifying spirit, have departed. Such visits are few, and with long intervals between. The relation between land-owner and land-occupier has undergone an unkindly alteration: the bond of attachment is broken; there is no longer on one part the generous bounty which, like mercy, is "twice blest," and which calls forth on the

other a grateful, and honest, and confiding dependence... a natural and a healthy state for the heart of man, however it may be regarded in your philosophy! And when fine properties are dissipated by vice or folly, and estates pass in consequence, by purchase, from one owner to another, the tenant has little to regret in the transfer, and less to apprehend from it, his rent having already been screwed to the sticking-place.

MONTESINOS.

There is something less melancholy in a ruined mansion, than in one which, being deserted as a residence, and not condemned to dilapidation, is just preserved from decay;.. where the housekeeper has to see that light and air may enter the forsaken apartments, and to keep them in such a state, swept and garnished, as might invite thither the ghosts of their old possessors,.. if ghosts were as unhappy as Homer represents them, or if they were doomed to do penance in what had been the scenes of their prosperity and pride. If the last of the Cliffords in these northern parts, had abused her gifts of fortune, one might fancy that her troubled spirit would haunt the mournful chambers of Appleby and Skipton on spectral days of humiliation; and turn from these for relief to

other castles which she used to gladden with her presence, but amid whose ruins now

The gadding bramble hangs her purple fruit,
And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.

Wordsworth.

The noble-minded lady set over the gates of those castles which she restored, this text :*
“ They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places ; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations ; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.” Yet her own grandson demolished three of the castles which she, with a religious as well as an ancestral feeling, had repaired ! and in each of which, during her residence, “ every Monday morning, she caused ten shillings to be distributed among twenty poor householders of that place, besides the daily alms which she gave at her gates to all that came.” The Duchess of Marlborough (Sarah, who with all her faults will ever be as emphatically the Duchess of that name, as her glorious husband will be the Duke) said in her old age, “ there would be this great happiness in death, that one shall never hear any more of

* Isaiah, lviii. 12.

anything they do in this world.” It might have troubled the Countess of Pembroke in heaven, if she could have heard that the works upon which she prided herself with so just and noble a feeling had been demolished, . . and by whom. If amid the ruins of Brougham Castle I were to meet one of those spectres

Whose walking fear to others is,
And to themselves a woe,

I should at once apprehend whose spirit it must be, and that she was come thither to regard mournfully and indignantly the site of that chamber in which her noble father * was born, and her blessed mother died.

* Words which the Countess never failed to repeat in her Journal, when she speaks of coming to take up her residence in that apartment.

“ And in this settled abode of mine,” says the Countess (writing A.D. 1651), “ in these three ancient houses of my inheritance, Appleby Castle and Brougham Castle in Westmoreland, and Skipton Castle or House in Craven, I do more and more fall in love with the contentment and innocent pleasures of a country life ; which humour of mine I do wish with all my heart (if it be the will of Almighty God) may be conferred on my posterity that are to succeed me in these places ; for a wise body ought to make their own homes the place of self-fruition, and the comfortablest part of their life. But this must be left to a succeeding Providence, for none can tell what shall come after them ; but to invite them to it, that saying in the 16th of Proverbs, verses 5, 6, 7 and 8, may be fitly

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Upon the supposition that we walk for penance, you might, perhaps, conclude that it is part of my punishment to converse with you.

MONTESINOS.

I might well have supposed so, Sir Thomas, had you not at the commencement of these visits assigned a motive for them more flattering to myself. Were you sent upon earth to do penance, methinks of all your earthly haunts, the Court of Chancery* would be the fittest place.

applied: 'The lot is fallen to me in a pleasant place: I have a fair heritage.' And I may truly say that verse,

From many noble progenitors I hold
Transmitted lands, castles and honours which they swayed of old."

Whether these verses are her own composition, or whether she only remembered, and elongated, and mis-metered them, they show that the sweet poet who was her tutor had not thought it necessary to give her any lessons in the art of poetry.

* Sir Thomas More, when he was Chancellor, "dispatched more causes in shorter space than were wont to be in many years before or since. For once he sate when there was no man or matter to be heard; this he caused to be enrolled in public acts of that Court. It is strange to those that know there have been causes there depending some dozen years. And there be so many things there heard, that it will be a rare thing to hear the like again."

Dr. Wordsworth's Ecclesiastic Biography, vol. ii. p. 96.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But there I should be better off than the suitors, for it would be only purgatory to me; whereas they have cause enough to look upon it as a place from whence *nulla est redemptio* for them.

MONTESINOS.

Dodd, the Roman Catholic historian, (if to have written what he denominates a history may entitle a man to that designation,) says that a descendant of yours, in Hertfordshire, had preserved what he is pleased to call one of your *chops*, till the year 1642. Even the Court of Chancery, methinks, might have more attractions for you than the oratory wherein this relic may be still preserved.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Truly my very ghost would be chop-fallen at beholding an instance of so sad and so debasing a superstition.

But to return once more to the stile where we came over: I was observing that your nobles are not a degenerate race; exceptions there are and must be, seeing that *omne genus hominum habet suum vulgus*; but the high-mindedness which ought to characterize the order, is still found in it. And although, upon certain subjects, there must of necessity be more minute

and practical knowledge in a popular assembly, where men of commercial habits are intermixed, yet upon graver matters, in which the great and permanent interests of the nation are concerned, as much information and as much ability are displayed in the Upper as in the Lower House; and a feeling of those interests which is more likely to retain its steadiness and strength, because it is not so liable to veer with the wind of popular opinion. But frequent promotions to the peerage must, in their consequences, alter the character of both Houses, to the deterioration of both. Obviously they must lower the standard of the peerage. It was said of old, that gentility is nothing more than ancient riches: this cannot always be said of gentility in these days, nor indeed is it, when it really exists, anything the worse for its recent origin. But wealth ripens into generosity less easily than it rots* into wantonness and dissipation: and to promote men for mere favour or for paltry present interests, who have no other pretension

* The expression is from Sir George Mackenzie's Essay, (p. 337.) "accumulated wealth rots into luxury." The same truth is differently illustrated by a Spanish writer. "*Y de la manera que el agua estancia y rabalsada, cria sapos y sabandijas, las riquezas superfluas malas obras y malos pensamientos.*"—Juan Ripol. *Dialogo de Consuelo por le Expulsion de los Moriscos.* Pamplona, 1614.

than what wealth may be supposed to offer, what is this but to put honour at a price, and thereby to contaminate it?

MONTESINOS.

More direct injury has been done to the House of Commons. When Mr. Pitt removed from thence so many of the great land-holders into the House of Lords, their place in the Commons was to be supplied, at best, with men who had less of that influence which properly belongs to property in a commonwealth constituted as is ours; and room was made for men of a lower class and of a dangerous description, who, before the structure of Parliament was thus ... almost it may be said ... revolutionized, would never in the march of their ambition have approached its doors. Now although the House of Peers can derive no credit from Lord Cucumber, whose nobility has been raised in the hot bed of wealth, nor from Earl Mushroom, Marquis Toadstool, and the rest of the fungous order, no such direct evil and obvious danger arises from the unmerited elevation of such persons, as from the admission into the Commons of men whose prototypes are to be found in Cleon, and Cethegus, and Thersites and even Scapin. A notion, I know, prevails very generally among the members of that as-

sembly, that there is no other place in which factious questions can be entertained with so little inconvenience from the discussion, nor where a demagogue can do so little harm : he would speedily find his level there, they say, and be put down by the good sense of the House. They rely upon its good sense, its dignity and its tone. But when I call to mind the derogation which that dignity so frequently endures in the conduct of its present members ; .. when I observe what passes for wit in that assembly, and what for wisdom ; .. what fallacies pass undetected there, what absurdities are advanced and listened to, and applauded ; .. what confident mis-statements are hazarded in the fearlessness of ignorance and dupery ; .. what falsehoods are asserted in the hardihood of design, . . I cannot partake of this reliance. I cannot but think that there is no place in which a demagogue, well-armed with impudence, would feel more conscious of the strength which audacity supplies ; nor where he could be so mischievous and so dangerous. If the House failed to impose upon such a man by its tone, (and fail it would, if his own tone* were reso-

* “ Impudence in democratical assemblies does almost all that’s done : ’tis the goddess of rhetoric and carries proof with

lute,) I know not how it could curb a tongue, that should enounce without disguise the most revolutionary intentions, and propose the most revolutionary measures for bringing them about, after the insults to authority, the scoffs at religion, and the incitements to rebellion, which have at various times been uttered there with impunity, and sometimes without rebuke.

They are mistaken who suppose, that want of condition in life, or even want of character in these days, would keep a man down in that House, if he had ability and courage. Courage he might dispense with, because where there is no personal danger, there is a brazen quality that may very well supply its place; and in that quality such men are never deficient. And for ability, “Do you think,” said Philip Skelton, “the Devil ever sent a fool of his errand?”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

A great deal of his work is done by fools, but it is when knaves direct or drive them.

MONTESINOS.

The miserable thing is when upright intentions are thus misguided; when we see men with the worthiest feelings, and the most ho-

it. For what ordinary man will not, from so great boldness of affirmation, conclude there is great probability in the thing affirmed?”—*Hobbes's Behemoth.*

nourable views, led astray by specious sophistry, because they have not been well grounded in the principles wherein they were brought up; and because strength of mind is wanting in them to perceive clearly what is right, or strength of character to act upon that perception steadily. And when weak men are once beguiled into a wrong course, the difficulty of reclaiming them is in proportion to their weakness; for as our incomparable South* says, “he that recovers a fool, must first unfool him to that degree as to persuade him of his folly.” Alas, in any popular assembly it must needs be that the wise will† not be “so many as to make a few,” and in all such assemblies, instead of reasons being weighed, (for where should the balance be found, and who should hold it?) voices must be counted; .. there is no better method, and yet in that, “*nihil‡ est tam inæquale quam æqualitas ipsa; nam cum sit impar prudentia, par omnium jus est.*” It may have been otherwise in the days of Solomon, when the structure of society was simpler, human interests were less tortuous and involved, and men lived under a Providence which manifested itself to their grosser senses: but in these times there is

* Vol. v. p. 157. † Jackson. ‡ Pliny.

more likely to be confusion than safety in a multitude of counsellors.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Pursue that train of thought, and you will perceive that as the numbers in both Houses of Parliament have been increased, the constitution of both has been proportionately impaired. Other of your institutions ought long since to have been enlarged, that they might keep pace with the growing wants and claims of a growing population. But if the numbers in a deliberative assembly are increased beyond the convenient sum, its proceedings retain less of the character of deliberation, and the assembly itself partakes of the heat and temper of a popular meeting.

MONTESINOS.

In the Commons especially the alloy of numbers has debased the old standard. The more numerous such an assembly is, the greater must be the proportion of men who have less pretensions, whether natural or adventitious, to be entrusted with so momentous a charge as that of the national interests.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This is a consideration which should be borne in mind, wherever old governments are to be improved, or colonies founded. But there is another evil which every increase of the peerage

in its consequences increases. The younger sons of noble houses were formerly disposed of in comfortable abbeys, if they did not take the course of rapine in the bloodier ages of Europe, or of maritime adventure when the age of discovery arrived. They now form a class of men whose claims cannot be overlooked by a government which is carried on wholly by influence, and has no other means of maintaining itself. They are not indeed in this country, either physically or intellectually, a degenerate class, (there are parts of Europe in which the two-fold degradation is apparent.) Luxury has not effeminated them, nor is it considered a point of honour for men of quality to hold learning in contempt, as it was in my days, among some of the Italians.

MONTESINOS.

I have heard however of a knight of Malta, (remembered at Lisbon in my youth) who used to say in his English, “ I *tank* my God dat I never in all my life read a book dat was *ticker* dan my *tum*.” Our young *fidalgos* resemble this *Cavalleiro* as little as they do the Circassian gentry, whose habit of life it was, according to Tavernier, to sit still, say little, and do* no-

* *Ceux qui tiennent parmi eux le rang de gentils-hommes, sont tout le jour sans rien faire, demeurent assis, et parlent fort peu.*—lib. iii. c. 12.

thing. The wind of fashion and the tide of society have set in, both in a contrary direction; and literary accomplishments are now considered as hardly less essential for persons of a certain rank in life, than it was for them formerly to be skilled in arms. They show themselves therefore, generally speaking, as diligent and as ambitious in their youthful studies, as those of their competitors who have nothing but their attainments and themselves to trust to for their success in the world.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This I was about to say when you interrupted me with your knight of Malta; and to have remarked in sequence, that notwithstanding this, there is a great inconvenience in multiplying a class of men, who, independently of personal qualifications or merits, have on the score of their influential connections pretensions for employ and promotion in the public service, which being, as they are, valid to a certain extent, are not easily withstood when pushed beyond that extent, as they so frequently must be. The injurious effect of this has been felt abroad and at home, in your army and navy, in your colonies, your diplomacy, and, . . worse than any where else, because the miserable consequences of an unfit appointment are there, though less

immediately, more permanently felt, .. in your church establishment.

MONTESINOS.

This inconvenience is surely part of the price which must be paid for the blessing of a government so balanced and so guarded, that we can neither, on the one hand, be oppressed by the reckless obstinacy of an arbitrary will ; nor on the other, hurried into disgraceful and iniquitous courses by the violence of popular counsels.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

It is so; but it is also the reason why the French government has always been served by abler agents than yours. And though a price must necessarily be paid for what you rightly deem a blessing, there is no necessity that the price should be so large. A minister, before he swells the peerage for any other cause than that of great and manifest desert, should bear in mind that by so doing he weakens the government in the worst way, and is adding to a burden which clogs it more than the national debt.

COLLOQUY XIII.

THE RIVER GRETA.—TRADE.—POPULATION.—
COLONIES.

OUR Cumberland river Greta has a shorter course than even its Yorkshire namesake. St. John's beck and the Glenderamaken take this name at their confluence, close by the bridge, three miles east of Keswick, on the Penrith road. The former issues from Leatheswater, in a beautiful sylvan spot, and proceeds by a not less beautiful course for some five miles through the vale from which it is called, to the place of junction. The latter, receiving the streams from Bowscale and Threlkeld tarns, brings with it the waters from the southern side of Blencathra. The Greta then flows toward Keswick; receives on its way the Glenderaterra first, .. which brings down the western waters of Blencathra, and those from Skiddaw forest, .. then the smaller stream from Nathdale; makes a wide sweep behind the town, and joins the Derwent, under Derwent Hill, about a quarter

of a mile from the town, and perhaps half that distance from the place where that river flows out of the lake; but when swoln above its banks, it takes a shorter line, and enters Derwentwater.

The Yorkshire stream was a favourite resort of Mason's, and has been celebrated by Sir Walter Scott. Nothing can be more picturesque, nothing more beautiful, than its course through the grounds at Rokeby, and its junction there with the Tees;..and there is a satisfaction in knowing that the possessor of that beautiful place fully appreciates and feels its beauties, and is worthy to possess it. Our Greta is of a different character, and less known; no poet has brought it into notice, and the greater number of tourists seldom allow themselves time for seeing anything out of the beaten track. Yet the scenery upon this river, where it passes under the woody side of Latrigg, is of the finest and most memorable kind:

— *ambiguo lapsu refluitque fluitque,*
Occurrensque sibi venturas aspicit undas.

There is no English stream to which this truly Ovidian description can more accurately be applied. From a jutting isthmus, round which the tortuous river twists, you look over its

manifold windings, up the water, to Blencathra; down it, over a high and wooded middle-ground, to the distant mountains of Newlands, Cawsey Pike, and Grizedal.

About a mile below that isthmus, and in a part of the bottom hardly less beautiful, is a large cotton-mill, with the dwelling-houses and other buildings appertaining to such an establishment. I was looking down upon them from the opposite hill-side where my spiritual companion had joined me in one of my walks. We want an appellation, said I, for an assemblage of habitations like that below, which may as little be called grange or hamlet as it may village or town. My friend, Henry Koster, .. who, greatly my junior as he was, is gone before me to his rest, and of whom many places, many things, and many thoughts mournfully remind me, .. used to call it the *Engenho*, borrowing a word from his Brazilian vocabulary. Destitute of beauty as the larger edifice necessarily is, there is nevertheless something in its height and magnitude, and in the number of its windows, which reminds one of a convent. The situation contributes to the likeness; for the spot is one which the founder of a monastery might well have chosen for its seclusion and beauty, and its advantages of wood and water.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And which, Montesinos, would, in your eyes, be the more melancholy object of contemplation, . . the manufactory, or the convent?

MONTESINOS.

There are times and places in which each may be regarded with complacency, as contributing to the progress of the community, and to the welfare of the human race. There are times and places also in which they may each tend to retard that progress and counteract that welfare. The spirit of trade has raised this nation to its present point of power, and made it what it is, the riches which have thus been created being as it were the dung and dross with which the garden of civilization is manured, and without which the finest flowers and fruits of cultivated society could not be produced. Had it not been for the spirit of trade, and the impulse which the steam-engine had just then given to the manufacturing system, Great Britain could neither have found means nor men for the recent war, in which not only her vital interests, but those of the whole of Europe, were at stake. This good is paramount to all other considerations. Men act as they deem best for their own interest, with more or less selfishness, but always, upon the great scale,

having that object in view; and national wealth is produced by the enterprize and cupidity of individuals. Governments also pursue their own systems, more or less erroneously, (not without grievous errors, Heaven knows, even in those which act and which mean the best!) and the Providence which is over all, directs all to its own beneficent purposes.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You have remarked that wars may probably be rendered less frequent by the increased means of destruction with which modern science is arming the destroyer man. May not the manufacturing system be, in like manner, tending to work out, by means of the very excess to which it is carried, a remedy for the evils which it has brought with it?

MONTESINOS.

The steam-engine alone, without war, and without that increased taxation which war has rendered necessary, would have produced all the distress which our manufacturing population has experienced, and is likely again and again to experience. Johnson once said he wondered how a man should see far to the right who saw but a little way to the left;..reverse the terms, and there will then appear no cause for wonder. Men see far to the left,

and to the left only, when they have been trained to look only in that direction, .. never to the right, and never straight forward. This moral and intellectual obliquity of vision is but too easily produced. But in more direct reply to your question, .. that remedial process may be, and I would fain hope is, going on,

Whereby disease grows cure unto diseases...

A wisdom proper to humanity.—*Lord Brooke.*

There are two ways in which it may work. Other nations may compete with us, and our foreign trade in consequence may gradually decline. Something of this is already perceptible. The French are said to manufacture* about as much cotton now, as was manufactured in this country fourteen years ago. We now send abroad the thread, where we used at that time to export the manufactured article. The Americans also are endeavouring to supply their own consumption; they have this at heart, and there are no people who pursue what they think their advantage with more sagacity, nor with more determined eagerness and perseverance. An American, when he speaks colloquially of *power*, means nothing but a steam-engine. We can neither keep our machinery nor our work-

* So it was stated in a newspaper of 1827.

men to ourselves : to attempt it is, indeed, in the one case impolitic ; in the other oppressive ; in both unavailing. And wherever they go, and opportunity invites, enough of British capital to set them in activity will follow. No sense of patriotism will check this ; no laws can prevent it ; the facility of transferring capital being such, that Mammon in these days, like the Cupid of the poem,

Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.

This would be the euthanasia of the system, a gradual and easy decay without a shock ; and, perhaps, .. were time allowed, .. we might then hope for a palingenesia, a restoration of national sanity and strength, a second birth : .. perhaps, I say, .. and were time allowed, .. for I say this doubtfully, and that ghostly shake of the head with which it is received does not lessen the melancholy distrust wherewith it is expressed.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

O Montesinos ! the Mammon of unrighteousness hath made “ the heart of this people fat, and hath made their ears heavy, and hath shut their eyes ! ” * Pray you to the All-Merciful that this spirit continue not to possess the nation,

* Isaiah, vi. 10, 11.

until “ the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate :” .. or worse than desolate ! That part of the Prophet’s commination is come to pass among you which denounces that “ the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable ;” * and that also which saith that “ the people shall be oppressed,” .. not by their rulers, .. but “ every one by another, and every one by his neighbour.” Was there ever a people among whom age was treated with so little reverence, .. by whom honour was so little rendered where honour is due, .. and among whom (which is more immediately to our present topic) the desire of gain had so eaten into the core of the nation ? Too truly must it be said that every man oppresses his neighbour, or is struggling to oppress him. The landlord racks his tenant ; the farmer grinds the labourer. Throughout the trading part of the community every one endeavours to purchase at the lowest price, and sell at the highest, regardless of equity in either case. Bad as the feudal times were, they were less injurious than these commercial ones to the kindly and generous feelings

* Isaiah, iv. 10.

of human nature, and far, far more favourable to the principles of honour and integrity.

MONTESINOS.

There, Sir Thomas, you touch upon the second cause which is likely, in a less degree perhaps, but in a worse manner, to affect the commercial prosperity of Great Britain. In the competition of trade one ill principle sometimes counteracts another, and yet both being ill, work for ill, though an incidental good may be occasioned. The tradesman is not more desirous to obtain a high price from what in your days were called his chapmen, than he is to undersell his fellow dealers. The point of emulation between rival manufacturers, is not so much who shall send forth the best goods, but who the cheapest: flimsy articles are thus manufactured for rapid sale, and for the foreign market. Formerly their aim was to produce substantial goods, which should wear well, and with which the purchaser should have reason to be satisfied; now it is how to make the largest quantity with the smallest expenditure of materials.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But this is no new thing under the sun. Honesty, “the* health of the soul,” was in just

* Charron.

as sickly a state among the same class of men in my days, when clothmakers became poticaries, and thickened with flock-powder the web which they had stretched till its sinews cracked. This was done by the professors of godliness!

MONTESINOS.

Dum vivo, thrivo, was the motto for Ignoramus's arms, when Ignoramus was caricatured as a commonwealth's-man and a puritan. In those ages, no doubt, as in this, such professors might read that covetousness is the root of all evil, and assent to what they read, knowing at the same time that it was the root also of* their estate, and acting upon that knowledge. The sin as it related to the offending individuals was the same then as now, and falls under the same denunciation, ..† “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong!” but it was at that time confined to a narrow scale and within a narrow sphere, and neither affected the national interests, nor the national character, as both are in danger of being affected now. The goods of other, .. alas! that I must add honest, .. countries are obtaining a preference in foreign markets, because they can be trusted :

* Hobbes' Behemoth.

† Jeremiah, xxiii. 13.

it is no longer a sufficient warrant for ours to say that they are English. Ought I to repeat what has publicly been stated, . . or should I seek rather in shame to conceal the shameful fact, that the class of men who have thus injured the credit and disparaged the name of their country, have committed the further villainy of setting upon their goods a forged foreign mark, and procuring, under this false pretence, a sale for them in markets where they would otherwise have been unsaleable, because of their known inferiority ! It is not very long since one of the petty African kings said, he would send his son to England, that he might learn “ to read book and be rogue.” This negro had formed no incorrect opinion of the civilization which he had seen, and of the education which is given in the school of trade.

Johnson has remarked, that he had found men worse in commercial dealings, . . more disposed to take a dishonourable and dishonest advantage of each other, than he had any notion of, before he learnt from observation the melancholy fact; but he adds, that he had also found them more disposed to do one another good than he had expected. And this, I believe, is true ; men are benevolent when they are not selfish : but

while gain is the great object of pursuit, selfishness must ever be the uppermost feeling. I cannot dissemble from myself that it is the principle of our social system, and that it is awfully opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Have you never been led to apprehend that freedom of trade, like freedom of the press, may require restrictions; and that the evils occasioned by its abuse, may sooner or later render necessary a degree of wholesome restraint, which may well exist without vexatious interference?

MONTESINOS.

The evil of vexatious interference is so great, that I have been afraid to pursue that thought when it has risen in my mind. Certainly, I have suspected, that in this as in some other things of equal, or indeed greater importance, our ancestors were wiser in their generation than the men of these days; and that when trade is conducted by corporate bodies, the check upon fraud may more than compensate for any inconveniences arising from want of competition. There is too much competition in this country. Cheap shops ruin the fair trader. Goods are bought at the sale of a bankrupt's

stock, the bankruptcy having, perhaps, been fraudulent, or at least occasioned by an improvidence differing from dishonesty, rather in name than in nature. These goods for which the manufacturer receives a few shillings, or more probably a few pence, in the pound from the bankrupt's estate, are purchased at so low a rate that they can be retailed far below the cost price, and yet leave a large profit to the speculator; and at that low rate he sells them, in order to tempt customers, and undersell the upright dealer who has paid the just price for his wares. The saving which is thus afforded to the consumer, is but a paltry advantage compared to the injury with which what was formerly the settled system of fair trade is hereby affected. In this process, which is continually going on, the manufacturers are, in the first instance, the injured party. But they also are chargeable with having interloped to the detriment of the shopkeeper. Lest their mills should stand still, and partly, it may be believed, from an unwillingness to turn out of employ hands which can find no other employment (for this redeeming motive acts to a considerable extent) they manufacture more than there is any demand for, or than can find vent through the usual channels: these surplus goods, for the sake of ready money,

are hawked* about the country by their agents, at low prices; the low price which is all that can be looked for from persons who buy, not because they want the article, but because they are tempted by the undervalue at which it is offered, leads in its consequence to a deterioration of the goods: they have been sold below their proper price, because too much had been manufactured, and then they must be deteriorated in quality, because they are to be sold cheap; and the consumer finds at last that he has purchased dearly. There is evil in every step of this transaction, and the worst is the great injury which is done to the frugal fair-dealing shopkeeper. And now too, tradesmen who carry on business in large towns upon a great scale, follow the example of the manufacturers, and employ travellers in like manner to solicit

* A certain John Eggleton, in a letter to an M.P. written in 1702, advises that "hawkers, pedlars, and petty chapmen," should be prohibited "from travelling and trading up and down the nation; because they impoverished most of the corporations and market towns in England by depriving them of their trade; they encouraged the debasing of our manufactures by readily buying all sorts of ware, defective in length breadth and goodness; and they were the great vendors of smuggled goods: and they neither pay taxes, scot or lot, in any settled place."—*Scott's Somer's Tracts*, xi. 617.

orders from private families. “Live and let live,” is no longer the maxim in this greedy nation. Under this system the little shopkeepers are disappearing, as the small farmers disappeared when the devouring principle of trade was applied to agriculture upon the great scale; . . and yet what class of persons can so ill be spared as that wherein the habit of well regulated and hopeful frugality is most surely to be found; . . that where there is comfort and contentment enough to render persons happy in their station, and yet a prospect withal of improving it for their own old age, and for their children after them?

SIR THOMAS MORE.

If in the progress of your cultivation these feeders are cut off, be sure the stream of national prosperity will fail! There are evil states of society in which the very nature of the evil is to prolong, or as you would say, to perpetuate itself, . . and under this curse, the awful but the righteous and predicted punishment of their sins, whole nations are existing at this hour. But that cannot be a durable state of things, in which the increase of riches in a few, occasions an increase of poverty in the many. National wealth is wholesome only when it is equitably diffused.

MONTESINOS.

The more the children of Mammon possess
the more they are desirous of possessing,

*Leur convoitise magnifique
Jamais ne se peut assouvir.*

Jan Antoine de Baif.

nor is the epithet, which the old poet applies to such covetousness, too dignified, for the passion seems in these days to have borrowed something of the grandeur of ambition. And yet John Bunyan, whom, methinks, with a truer aptitude of discrepant terms, I may call the noble tinker, suggests a better illustration; the larger the heap which his poor muckworm has scraped together, the more eagerly he continues to rake.

Wealth is the Conjuror's devil,
Whom when he thinks he hath, the Devil hath him.
Herbert.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

It is not to the mere spirit of trade that this must be imputed. When my munificent old friend John Colet endowed his school at St. Paul's, he left it in perpetual trust not to the bishops, nor the chapter, nor the great men of the state, but to married citizens of the Mer-

cers' Company; . . to married men, because they, he thought, as fathers of families, would feel a proper interest in what was designed for the benefit of children; and to tradesmen because, he said,* he had found less corruption among men of that station than in any other class. Do not, then, look upon this evil as arising from the very nature of commerce, for there is no profession which more truly may deserve to be called liberal, when carried on by a just and honourable man. If it be now characterized by more of speculation and less of probity than in former times, it is because it is affected by what is now an epidemic malady in this land. There is at this time a diseased activity in the middle and higher classes; a feverish excitement, increased by the pressure of taxation, but far more by the prevailing fashion of an ostentatious and emulous expenditure, . . a symptom which hath ever preceded the decay of states. As the greedy spirit of trade has destroyed the small farmers, and is in like manner destroying the small tradesmen,

* *Reditibus totique negotio præfecit non sacerdotes, non episcopum aut capitulum ut vocant, non magnates, sed cives aliquot conjugatos, probatæ famæ. Roganti causam ait, nihil quidem esse certi in rebus humanis, sed tamen in his se minimum invenire corruptelæ.*—Erasm. Ep. L. 15. Ep. 14. Jod. Jonæ.

so has the class of inferior gentry almost disappeared under the operation of the distempered activity generated and fomented by these causes. I remember some homely lines in the Shepherd's Kalendar of my days, ..

And in especial, God to please,
Desire thou never none other man's thing;
Remember that many fingers are well at ease
That never wear no gold ring.

MONTESINOS.

So I once told a lady whose white hand would have been more pleasing in my eyes without such trinketry, when her fingers, being swoln with cold on a sharp winter's day, tightened round the rings with which they were studded, and made her understand feelingly the sort of pain produced by a thumb-screw.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The rude verses of that old moralizer are hardly more obsolete than the morality which they inculcate. Few, indeed, of those who possess the means of happiness, know how to use the means with which they are entrusted, because they know not in what the true happiness of an intellectual and immortal creature, made in the image of his Creator, consists. They involve themselves in the pursuits of the

world, which are its serious follies, when they have outgrown its lighter and more venial ones ; and, ceasing to be the slaves of frivolity, they become the slaves of business, instead of living to themselves, and their families, and their neighbours, and their God.

MONTESINOS.

But they call this living to their country ; and think that in so doing they make no little sacrifice to their duty, and to the service of the state.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

I am not speaking of what is called political life, though the remark bears upon it more forcibly than upon any other calling, because all who enter upon that course must be supposed to be influenced by choice, not by necessity, . . being possessed of wealth, either hereditary or acquired, in ample sufficiency for the comforts and refinement of the society wherein they are placed. My words had a wider meaning. How few among you are those who know how to use or to appreciate the blessings of competence and leisure !

MONTESINOS.

Leisure, indeed, there are not many who know how to enjoy ; time seems hardly to pass at a wearier pace with the miserable, than with

the listless and the idle; and with regard to competence, .. *Fortuna multis nimium dat, satis nulli*: .. competence has been well defined as meaning, in every one's acceptance, a little more than he himself happens to possess.

*Nul n'est content de sa fortune,
Ni mécontent de son esprit.*

M^e. Des Houlières.

But political events have, even within reach of my remembrance, made so great a change in the circumstances and constitution of our little world, that what in this respect was prudence and true wisdom half a century ago, might now justly be condemned as improvidence. More cases than one have occurred, within my own knowledge, of persons who wound up their commercial concerns, and retired from business with what appeared to their modest views a fortune equal to their wishes, and far above their wants; it was so at the time; but in the course of twenty years the value of money was so greatly diminished, and the whole expenditure of every household unavoidably and proportionately so increased, that they found themselves straitened in their old age, and had the grief of knowing that the children, for whom they thought a fair competence had been pro-

vided, must be left with a poor viaticum for the remainder of their melancholy pilgrimage. There is no floating at ease upon the agitated waters of our society; they who cannot struggle and swim, and buffet the waves that buffet them, must sink. Never was there so stirring an age as the present! From yonder little town, which with its dependant hamlets contains not more than four thousand inhabitants, adventurers go not only to the all-devouring metropolis, and to the great commercial and manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, but to Canada and the United States, to the East and West Indies, to South America, and to Australia. I could name to you one of its natives who is settled at Moscow, and another whose home is among the mountains of Caucasus. In these days there is not perhaps one man in a thousand (except among the higher families) who, if he lives to manhood, is buried with his fathers.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This is no happy stage of society, . . no wholesome state of things for the human heart. There is evil, great evil, in this disruption of natural ties, . . this weakening of the domestic affections, . . this premature dissolution of them. Those circumstances are as little favourable to happiness as they are conformable in their con-

sequences to the order of nature, which compel or tempt rational and reflective beings to dispose of their children, as animals who are regulated in their affections by mere instinct act toward their offspring, when the course of instinct is fulfilled.

MONTESINOS.

But it is an evil of necessity in our system. Even with all these outlets, every walk of life is crowded in this country. There are more labourers than can find employ, more artificers in every craft than can earn a livelihood. Where there is business enough for one tradesman, three or four compete for it. No common interest will suffice at this time for getting a boy placed as midshipman in the navy, or obtaining him a commission when that severe apprenticeship has been served. And if the price of commissions in the army were to be doubled, even then mere money would not avail to purchase them, so numerous would be the applicants. The courts of law are attended by swarms of briefless barristers upon every circuit: and were the plague to visit us for our offences, it would hardly afford employment for the young men who are trained, and training to the medical profession. The church alone is not greatly over-supplied with members, be-

cause the numbers who may be ordained are under some limitation.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You spoke of the Plague; and according to the picture you have drawn, there must be some among you ready, like the Mahommedans, to look upon the Plague itself as a blessing, sent by the Almighty to clear off a superfluous population.

MONTESINOS.

We have indeed metapoliticians, whose theories upon this subject tend quite as much to derogate from the goodness of God, and in a greater degree to harden the heart of man. Their attention has been directed to the increase of the poorer orders.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

A fearful threat, indeed, was denounced through the Prophet against a land where the commandments of the Lord were despised,* .. “I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars, they shall lift up a shout against thee!”

MONTESINOS.

You must not suppose that our political economists seek in the Bible for instruction! Moral considerations are allowed no place in their philosophy, .. how much less then should

* Jeremiah, chap. li. v. 14.

religion be found there! Everything is gross and material in that philosophy;..it is of the earth, earthy; and not of earth, as it came from the hands of that beneficent and all-wise Creator who saw that it was good; but as it has been rendered by man, where the filth and refuse of a crowded and ill-ordered society have accumulated, and the waters of its broken conduits, and the contents of its sewers have met and stagnated, and all together has become rank, noxious, putrescent and pestilential. Their philosophy is the growth of such a compost! They discover the cause of all our difficulties and evils, not in the constitution of society, but of human nature; and there, also, they look for it, not where it is to be found, in its sinfulness and fallen state, but in its essence, and the primal law which was its primal benediction! Take the brains of the whole school, and distil them *in vacuo*, (which is the nearest approximation to the natural process in this case,) and you could not extract so much essential thought as may be found in any one page of our old divines...Although of England itself, which is so much the most improved of the united kingdoms, more than a sixth part is at this time uncultivated, and a far larger proportion of Wales and Scotland and the sister island;..though we have in our colonies tracts of

habitable land equal in extent to the whole surface of habitable Europe, . . they will not perceive that there is room either at home, or abroad, for what they call our surplus population; and instead of enlarging the hive, or sending out swarms, as nature indicates, and the plainest policy enjoins, they advise us to starve the bees, that so they may be prevented from breeding! They have made themselves so incapable of seeing the immediate and ready remedy which earth and ocean offer us, that this is the alternative they choose, . . this the remedy they prescribe! “ Eyes have they, and yet see not.”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This blindness is not of the eyes alone,
But of the mind, a dimness and a mist.*

MONTESINOS.

The difficulty, when we seriously contemplate the subject, is not in disposing of that part of the population who come upon the poor rates for assistance or support: the great majority of these poor people being willing to emigrate, willing to work, to go anywhere where they may be able to provide for themselves, to do anything whereby they may earn their bread. Whatever means may be devised for

* Higgins. *Mirror of Magistrates*, vol. i. p. 308.

their benefit, they are ready to co-operate, and perform their part. They can dig,..and though hard necessity and hardening example have made too many of them not ashamed to beg, they would rather live by labour than by mendicity. But how they should be set to work,..how the beginning should be made,..is what we must not expect to learn from any professor of political economy;..as Lord Cottington said of old, “ it is not under his cap.”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The wisdom of the heart is wanting there. Statesmen seem hitherto as little to have dreamt of the good which it is in their power to effect, as sailors of the American and Australian regions before the age of maritime discovery. They have not yet had faith enough in goodness to believe in the moral miracles which benevolence and zeal are able to perform! If at any time they have entertained a serious wish for bettering the condition of their fellow-creatures, the difficulties which they see before them have appeared like mountains in the way; and yet, had they faith but as a grain of mustard seed, those mountains might be removed. There is abundant room in this country, and its colonies, for any possible increase of population, *incolumi Jove*, till the end of time! Only let the poor and indigent

be placed where they may “labour for that which satisfieth,” and “the earth will give seed to the sower and bread to the eater:” “they shall build houses and inhabit them; and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice.”

MONTESINOS.

The lower classes may be more easily disposed of, and are both more willing and more able to aid in disposing of themselves, than the overflow of educated persons. No small part of the danger, with which our institutions are threatened, arises from the number of adventurers in the middle rank of life, who, being unsuccessful, are therefore discontented. These become more numerous in every generation. “The world is not their friend, nor the world’s law:” and in disturbed times they must always be dangerous subjects, to whom all change might seem to offer hope, and who have nothing to risk but lives of which they are weary. Loyal obedience, wherein the safety of a state consists, can only rest either in the principle of duty, or the contented sense of well-being: the first can scarcely be said to exist in this corrupted nation; the second is not to be found among the labouring poor, nor in the great body of disappointed adventurers.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And for this you have no remedies, no palliatives even, except such as chance may present !

MONTESINOS.

A safety valve was opened for us, by what, humanly speaking, may be called chance, at the end of the war. A great number of those brave and unfortunate officers in the army and navy, and more unfortunate midshipmen, who were disbanded upon the conclusion of the peace, hopeless of promotion in their own profession, and unfitted for any other, found their way to South America, and engaged in the service of the revolutionary states, by sea or by land; some in the persuasion that they were aiding a generous and a noble cause; but the greater number in a spirit of desperate adventurousness, having no hope elsewhere.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Why was no outlet opened for such persons, to whom the nation had contracted a moral obligation? They had entered its fleets and armies when their services were wanted, and had exposed their lives freely and gallantly when lives were in demand. When they had brought the war to its desired termination,

(a termination, oh, how far exceeding in honour that of any former war in which England had been engaged!) was it fitting that this should be their reward? Was it fitting that English blood should be made as cheap throughout the revolutionary states of South America as the English goods with which their markets were glutted by your greedy speculators? Was it fitting that they who had brought the ship of the state safely and triumphantly into port, should then be turned adrift themselves? that having fought their country's battles victoriously, and exalted their country's name, they should be left to engage in contests, in which none of the honourable courtesies of war are observed, none of its redeeming humanities are to be found; but where, with a strong and exasperated feeling of right, on either side, the most nefarious acts of brutal injustice and atrocious barbarity were perpetrated on both? Was it fitting that these things should be? Was it just? Was it honourable to the English name?

MONTESINOS.

In this however, there has been hardship, without injustice, inflicted or complained of. It was the condition upon which these adventurers entered the service. Every one knew that the army must be reduced in time of

peace. No sooner had peace been obtained than there was an immediate cry for a reduction of expenses, and a necessity for it; and the first obvious reduction, in deference to that cry, was of the military and naval establishments. The half-pay of a subaltern is indeed barely sufficient for his single subsistence; but a burthened nation cannot afford more. In these things individual cases must be overlooked: they can no more be regarded in the general measures of government, than in the operations of nature.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Are they then unregarded in the operations of nature? Those operations are under the guidance of that Providence which feedeth the fowls of the air, and without which not a sparrow falls to the ground. Look to your heart, Montesinos, if the words were spoken advisedly; look to your heart, and if at any moment the cloud and the darkness come over you, pray for light and for forgiveness, from that God in whom you live, and move, and have your being! The earthquake may crush, and the flood overwhelm, and the pestilence sweep away the children of men; but are you to be told that let death, which must come, come when it may, it comes, and can only come, in

the order of Providence? How infinitely little then imports it whether it comes soon or late, life being but “a place which God hath given us in time, for the desiring of eternity!”*

MONTESINOS.

O monitor and friend, the words deserve reproof, but not the intention! I spoke them not in blindness or obduracy, but expressed in common language an illustration drawn from the surface of things.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But it behoves you to look always into the life of things, and especially to guard against language which could not have become common, unless men, having eyes and seeing not, had ceased to regard that which is the life of life... Nor is this all that deserves reprehension in your speech: you looked at the political question as merely political, and spake as if you regarded it in the hard-hearted way in which these things are officially considered. If it were your own way of thinking,..if the spring from whence such a reply proceeded lay lower than the lips and larynx, I should have had too little sympathy with one so minded,..too little hope of any good that might

* Jeremy Taylor, vol. iii. p. 447.

be done to him, and through him to others, to have put on visibility, and introduced myself to him in this world. Methinks it should require but little reflection, and no extraordinary portion of good-will towards others, to perceive that individual interests may in very many cases be consulted with advantage to the general good, certainly without detriment to it, and that they ought always to be so consulted when they can. Without inquiring here in what manner this might be done both in the army and navy at all times, let me ask whether, at the conclusion of a war, a system of military colonization might not be adopted, like that of the Romans, modified according to change of times and difference of circumstances ?

MONTESINOS.

Such an experiment in home-colonization was tried after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, when soldiers and sailors were settled on some of the forfeited estates in Scotland: decent houses were built for them, and a portion of land allotted to each; three pounds in money given to every settler, and nine more lent him to begin the new world with, on which he was about to enter. Pennant calls it an Utopian scheme, which was frustrated by the loose and incorrigible habits of the men: they soon spent

their money, and then left their tenements to be occupied by the next comer. Yet, he observes, that Utopian as the project was, and notwithstanding the total failure of the primary object, some advantages ensued: a good deal of ground was inclosed, several plantations were formed in a wild country, a better manner of building cottages was introduced, and the comfortable dwellings which the first idle inmates deserted, were left for a more industrious people. Unsuccessful as the experiment proved, the principle was right; it was a straight-forward step in policy, which there may be some advantage in referring to at present, when, crab-like, so many of our movements are oblique, and so many, like those of the lobster, are, as Sir Boyle Roche would have said, in retrograde progression. The error seems to have been in disbanding the men instead of settling them in companies, with their proper officers, still under command: the same habit of obedience which made them work upon the military roads, would then have kept them to their duty, till by military discipline, thus directed to moral ends, a second nature had been induced.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Right, Montesinos, . . with the aid of the

Bible and of chaplains, who being thus converted into parish priests, should have discharged their duty with fidelity. For in colonizing, upon however small a scale, the vow should be remembered which David vowed unto the Almighty God of Jacob: "I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber, neither the temples of my head to take any rest, until I have found out a place for the temple of the Lord." The chief reason why men in later times have been worsened by colonization (as they very generally have been, from whatever nation they have been sent forth,) is, that they have not borne this in mind. In this respect the Jews have been wiser (in theory at least, for they have had no opportunity of practice,) than any Christian people have yet shown themselves: it was a tradition among them that wherever ten men of Israel were settled together, a synagogue ought to be built there.

MONTESINOS.

This is indeed the chief reason why the state of morals is generally so much worse in colonies than in the parent state. But there are other causes. Slavery, wherever it exists, is a sure cause of corruption, and of the worst kind. Nor is it any blessing for man in his fallen

state, when that part of the primeval punishment which cursed the ground for his sake, and appointed him to eat bread in the sweat of his brow, is with regard to him suspended. Colonists are worsened wherever the means of subsistence are abundantly produced with little or no labour on their part. Thus the multiplication of cattle has brutalized the boors of South Africa, the peons of La Plata, and the Brazilians of Rio Grande, Piahy, and the other grazing countries of Brazil. When cattle are raised merely for slaughter, when they are not employed in agriculture, and nothing is looked for from them but their hides and their flesh, or perhaps the hides alone, the people become worse than barbarians: their physical condition is better than that of a hunting tribe, but their moral state is far more loathsome: but when milk becomes a part of their food, a different feeling is introduced, and a better stage of society begins. The horse is no where so well treated as where mare's milk is in use. A greater moral contrast can hardly be supposed between two nations whose physical circumstances are in many respects very much alike, than exists between the Esquimaux and the Laplanders, and the cause appears to be that

the latter have been humanized by the reindeer.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Let other circumstances be what they may, it is the nature of man to worsen if he be left to himself: his body is not more seriously injured by unnatural restraint, than his better part is if it be under no controul of wholesome discipline. In home colonies..(and it will not always be the reproach of this kingdom that large tracks of land are lying waste while thousands are wanting employment, and tens of thousands derive their chief means of support from the poor rates,) in home colonies, I say, if there be any wisdom manifested in forming them, the established order of the general community will be, as of course, observed, and opportunity is offered for supplying the defects of that order. In these, therefore, the poor and destitute may wisely be employed; for even if the admixture of persons in a more improved, or more fortunate condition, were left wholly to the natural course of things, they cannot sink below the standard of surrounding civilization. But when foreign colonies are to be founded or enlarged, it must be as ill a policy to stock them with the outcasts and refuse of society, its criminals and its paupers, the

most guilty or the most wretched, the ignorant and the worthless of the mother country, as it would be to propagate grafts from a diseased tree, or of a fruit bad in its kind.

MONTESINOS.

There is the same difficulty at this day which Bacon remarked when treating of the plantations in Ireland; “those men will be least fit* which are like to be most in appetite of themselves; and those most fit, which are like least to desire it.”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The colonists of my age sought first for plunder, secondly for mines...a pursuit in which they sometimes endured almost as much suffering as they inflicted, and yet less than

* Captain Beaver, in his most interesting account of the attempt to establish a British settlement on the island of Bulama, says of the adventurers, “when the terms of subscription were so very moderate, it is not to be wondered at that in such a great city as London some profligate and worthless characters were to be found among the subscribers; but I think we had more than one would have expected.” One among them “had been guilty of wilfully setting fire to a house, of robbery, of murder, of forgery, and, of incest, .. of all which (says Captain Beaver) I had full proofs after his death.” It is no pleasant reflection that a miscreant in the land we live in should have committed these crimes, and escaped punishment, and even detection, for all of them.

they deserved. In these days men go to the colonies for the purpose of accumulating fortunes by trade, or by agricultural speculations carried on in the spirit of trade; seeking the same end, though by better means. Few are they who, in removing from a crowded society, where, if there be any hope in their prospect, it is a hope indefinitely deferred, look to the moral advantages which a new country possesses, and which are of such moment that in many instances they may well be deemed to outweigh the social and intellectual enjoyments of their native land. The desire of wealth is the one impelling motive. Yet there must be many who might be induced to transplant themselves by worthier considerations, if opportunity were afforded them of providing a sure subsistence, in all comfort and independence, for themselves and their posterity, to the third and fourth generation. There must be many who are capable of understanding and feeling that a patriarchal state is better and happier than a commercial one, ..happier if temporal enjoyment were the only object of desire, and immeasurably better for them as intellectual and immortal beings.

MONTESINOS.

Military settlements, for which alone the fa-

cilities which you appear to ask from a government could readily be supplied, were attempted at the close of the late war; and this I ought to have remembered when you arraigned the state for a want of due feeling towards the disbanded soldiers. Establishments for them in Upper Canada were projected, and the men who were willing to become colonists were provided with a passage thither for themselves and families; land in proportion to their respective ranks was allotted; the largest allotment being twelve hundred acres for a field-officer, the smallest, one hundred, for a private. Implements of husbandry were given them, and materials also to assist in building their habitations; and they were allowed rations of provisions for one year, the estimated cost of which was twenty pounds for each individual: but this was insufficient, and its continuance should have been fixed for six months longer, seeing that no preparations whatever had been made for receiving the people upon the ground intended for them. Their lots had been previously surveyed, but upon reaching them, they found themselves in the wilderness; no foundations had been laid, no clearance begun, and the men themselves were far from being fitted for the work which they were required

to perform. When the former experiment was made in Scotland, the men had previously been broken in to labour, and drilled, as it were, in the use of the spade and the mattock, upon the roads; and yet this training failed (except in few instances) to produce either the disposition or the habits which would have qualified them for a life of regular industry. But in Canada there had been no such training, and the settlers had to contend not only with the difficulties of their situation, but with the worse habit of idleness which they had contracted as soldiers. So it is not strange that an experiment, the plan whereof was so much better in its design than in its details, should have failed as to its primary purpose. Indeed, though the settlements were called military, they were not, properly speaking, military colonies: the men were under certain regulations, to which they were required to conform; but having been disbanded before they were placed there, the principle of military obedience was withdrawn: they were thus left to act each upon his own views of self-interest, instead of under the sense of obligation and duty; and a great many of them forsook their allotments, and went to seek their fortune in the United States. The settlements still exist, for casual settlers

were admitted and encouraged ; and other soldiers also received locations there, who being in Canada when the term of their limited service expired, chose to accept of such a resting-place, instead of a passage to England. Nor has the experiment been quite useless as to its first intent ; experience has been gained by it to be acted upon hereafter ; the men who remained upon their lots are now reaping the fruit of their industry and patience, and their children's children will have cause to bless the beneficent Government which placed them there.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

By what inducements should these settlers be drawn into the United States ?

MONTESINOS.

By a persuasion that the means of subsistence are more surely and easily to be obtained there ; and this persuasion operates extensively. The casual emigrants who find their way every year from these islands to Canada are estimated at about ten thousand, and of these it has been said that* four-fifths pass into the American provinces. A great proportion of these are Irish, who of all emigrants, (though they work as willingly as the best,) are the least thrifty,

* First Report on Emigration, p. 48.

and the least disposed to live quietly and in obedience to the laws; insomuch that in America they are the most wretched part of the whole population,* except the free blacks in New York. About a fourth of the English emigrants are supposed to find their way back to England;† but they who have been bred to any handicraft trade remain, wages being high, and employment certain. When Americans become restless, their bent is toward the wilderness; they move into the back settlements, and there become the pioneers of civilization. British and Irish adventurers, on the contrary, when removed to an uncultivated land, appear to pine after the haunts of men, and make when they can toward the centre of society instead of remaining beyond its frontiers. What to the American back-settler seems the perfection of wild independence, they regard with dislike; perhaps, because they have been accustomed to consider such relegation to the wilderness as a punishment appropriated for criminals. There is yet another cause. Geneva was not more devoutly looked to as the pattern in the mount by our Puritans, in the days of Calvin and Beza, than the United States are now, as a sort of

* Second Report on Emigration, p. 37.

† First Report, p. 115.

political Holy-land, by persons who are *ill affected either to the civil or ecclesiastical regimen at home. Such persons assent to all the representations which the Americans delight in making of their improved polity and enlightened freedom, and this opinion has spread among the lower orders : so that when assistance for removing to Canada has been afforded to poor families, either by their parishes or by the state, a great many have availed themselves of it only for the sake of a passage, at the public expense, to this promised land.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And thus you send out, at the public charge, able hands to increase the rapidly increasing population of a country wherein a hostile spirit is cherished against you, and against which you

* Mr. Gamble says of the Presbyterians who emigrate from the North of Ireland to America, that he has “ seen many hundreds of their letters to their friends and relations ; and scarcely with an exception, the comfort most insisted on, the comfort of comforts was, that they could there speak to man as man, and that they were not obliged to uncover the head, or to bend the knee to any stern lord, arrogant squire, proud vicar, or, above all, upstart agent !” And these he calls “ a valuable description of people, whose loss is a subject of regret to all who take an interest in the welfare of these kingdoms !” — *Views of Society in the North of Ireland*, p. 367.

may be again engaged in war, no one can foresee how soon!

MONTESINOS.

I do not see how any such consideration should affect the policy of this Government with regard to what is deemed its surplus population, unless it were by directing its emigrants rather to South Africa and Australia, than to its North American possessions. It is incontestable that the removal of so many hands for which employment cannot be found at home, is in our present circumstances an immediate good: but it may be doubted whether any eventual evil is to be apprehended from thus accelerating the growth of the United States. The faster they grow the sooner they will separate. And though we have been unnatural enemies, the time, I trust, is approaching when both nations will perceive and acknowledge that they ought to be natural friends. The Americans, I believe, are not desirous of such an increase as we send them: they have poor enough of their own, and can derive little benefit from an influx of persons who are not likely to raise the standard either of manners or of principle among them.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Upon this evil it is, Montesinos, that I would

fix your attention. There is not a sufficient admixture of good materials in the foundation of your colonies. The old saying,

Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt,

is true only for a time, and for no long time. Colonists change their country as well as their climate; and they acquire even in the first generation a new physical character, and a new moral one perhaps still sooner; but the tendency is towards a lower standard of general manners than prevails in the society which they have left. This it must be, from inevitable circumstances, at first, even when the platform of the new settlement is laid after the model of the old, and the gradations of the community, as far as possible, carefully preserved; but the debasement is likely to be permanent, if no such care be taken. In laying the foundation of their colonies, the Spaniards of all modern nations have shown the most forethought, the English least.

MONTESINOS.

But what has been the result? the Spanish colonies are separated from the mother country, and nothing remains of them to Spain except the perpetual reproach which must endure as long as any record of their history, from their first

establishment to their final loss, shall be preserved.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

That reproach applies not to the policy with which the foundations of those colonies were laid : they would have been well laid had they not been laid in blood. And when you refer to the separation as proof of mispolicy on the part of the mother country, you should remember that the establishment of the Spanish colonies was anterior by more than an hundred years to that of the Anglo-American, and that they were retained half a century longer. Wherever the Spaniards settled, their first business was to plant their own institutions : their polity was in that age at its best, their religion at its worst ; the former when thus transplanted lost much of its good, the latter more of its evil. The cities which they founded were in the course of half a century little inferior to those of the mother-land in any thing, except those awful works of ecclesiastical architecture, which in that age the European nations, one and all, were so little capable of equaling, that they had ceased to appreciate and even to admire them. In these cities all the gradations of Spanish society were found, except that the Court was wanting ; and the Court was repre-

sented wherever there was a vice-regal establishment. Bad subjects it was impossible that the Government could keep out, especially when so much bloody and wicked work was to be done ; but every precaution which could be devised was taken to prevent persons of bad character from embarking for the Indies.

MONTESINOS.

The Portugueze, on the contrary, in the same age, sent out criminals to Brazil ; but they did this more from necessity than from choice. Their population was insufficient for the schemes of extensive, and, ..it may fairly be added, ..generous ambition in which they were engaged : and therefore they had recourse to a measure, the ill consequences of which were lamented by all their own writers who have touched upon the subject.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Has it been wisely done in your Government to follow, upon deliberate choice, an example which the Portugueze only from necessity had set, and which in their case had answered so ill ?

MONTESINOS.

Looking at what time and chance have brought about, I know not whether we may say that it has answered ill. For by the de-

scendants of these men, and of others who were their fit companions, (a mixed breed, which could hardly have been raised under any better system of colonization,) the interior of that great country was explored, from the plains of Piratininga to the Parana and the sources of the Paraguay, and from Matto Grosso to the Orellana, and to the frontiers of Quito and Popayan: and their posterity are at this day in a better state, and (if they escape the curse of revolution) a more hopeful one, than those Mexicans and Peruvians and Columbians, who can trace their descent from the proudest names in Castilian history.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But here, Montesinos, the past must be taken into your estimate. There were two centuries during which the standard of civilization at Mexico and Lima was not below that of Madrid: you will not compare Bahia and Pernambuco, to say nothing of S. Paulo and Para, with Lisbon during the same portion of time. Methinks you would not desire to have a race of Paulistas or Para-men grow up beyond the Blue Mountains of Australia.

MONTESINOS.

The land, if gold mines were discovered there, happily would not supply slaves for

working them. That colony originated in a scheme ill digested, and in itself objectionable on weighty grounds ; but this direct good has been effected by it, that the English language has been planted in Australia, and has taken root there, ..

“ A goodly tree, whose leaf
No winter e'er shall nip !”

And the collateral good is yet greater ; for had no such settlement been previously formed, that mission would not have been undertaken, which in so many of the South-sea islands has put an end to a bloody and flagitious system of heathenism, and which will spread the comforts of civilization and the blessings of Christianity throughout all Polynesia. Am I wrong in thinking that the disposal of Providence becomes more manifest here when we reflect upon the errors of the original plan, and the worse errors which were committed by those who managed the affairs of the colony at home ? I pass over the extravagance of transporting convicts to the farthest * part of the globe, because, without some such ostensible motive, no scheme of colonization would have been at-

* A situation for such a colony had been sought in vain upon the coast of Africa.

tempted ; and because one of the most difficult problems in polity is, how to dispose of such persons in an age when the depravity of the people, and the humanity of the public and of the Government keep pace with each other. I pass over the imprudence of colonizing with criminals, instead of employing them as the bondsmen of better colonists : this error was in the original scheme. But the whole colony was more than once in danger of perishing with hunger, because supplies were not dispatched thither in time. And what should be said of the management which, sending out 5000 convicts in the course of the first twelve years to colonize a new country, made its arrangements with so little forethought, that only a fifth part of that number were women, and of those women many were actually infirm by reason of old age ! I know not whether any measures have even yet been* taken for remedying an

* The disproportion among the convicts has doubled since that time ! Mr. Eager, in his Evidence before the Emigration Committee, (1st Report, p. 101,) says, that among those people he supposes “ there are not three women to twenty men ; perhaps not one to ten.” The general muster for the year 1821 shows not one to twelve !—men, 12,608 ; women, 1206. (Wentworth’s Australasia, i. 481.) Among the free people the women were in the proportion of little more than three to five. The disproportion will be remedied when death

error which would be ludicrous for its extreme absurdity, if it were not monstrous in its consequences. The deficiency might surely have been supplied by giving a passage, from time to time, to as many of those unhappy women who infest the streets of London, as would thankfully have accepted such an offer of deliverance.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The regulated polyandrianism which Cæsar found established in the south of Britain, could not have been so pernicious in its consequences, as the dissoluteness which this incredible mismanagement must produce in a new colony.

MONTESINOS.

The polyandrian system, I think, must have originated when some great body of invaders,

has swept away the existing generation, and the population will be cut down accordingly ; but the dissolute manners which have been occasioned by this cause, in a far greater degree than by the original depravity of the stock, will, it may be feared, not be remedied so soon or so surely. Mr. Wentworth (vol. i. 365) gives a frightful picture of the "native-born females," justly observing, that their depravity is occasioned by the "vast and alarming disproportion which exists between the sexes;" but when, in the same page, he described the young men as "almost invariably temperate, chaste, frugal and laborious," he had forgotten that where the women of a community are dissolute the men cannot be otherwise.

who brought no women with them, settled themselves by conquest in a country where little resistance was made. Beginning thus, custom might perpetuate it, aided in some places by pride* of caste, in others† by policy, where the wicked principle prevailed, that it was better to prevent the increase of population than to provide an outlet for it. The moral effects of such a system cannot by possibility be worse than what polygamy produces: the political consequences certainly not so bad.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You do not mean to vindicate the system?

MONTESINOS.

Nor you to suspect me of so abominable an intention! I only compare one evil with another, when endeavouring to explain in what manner that of which the origin is least obvious can have arisen. If I am not mistaken, it was continued among a remnant of the British, or rather Keltic people, much later‡ than any

* In Malabar.

† In Tibet.

‡ As late as the 12th century it existed in Galloway, according to Capgrave, in his life of Aelred, Abbot of Rivaux: "*Est enim terra illa fera, silvestris, et barbara; bestiales homines, et barbarum omne quod gignit. Castitas toties patitur naufragium, quoties libido voluerit, nec est inter castam et scortum ulla distantia: mulieres per menses viros alternant.*"—Acta SS. Jan. t. i. 750.

other observance of Druidical times: and a practice virtually, or rather viciously, the same has been imputed to the Venetian aristocracy, as the customary, though cryptic means, whereby the cadets of noble families were prevented from leaving a posterity who should sink beneath the rank of their race. Into such evils are men betrayed...into such abominations are they gradually drawn...when, instead of conforming their institutions and customs to the order of nature and the revealed laws of God, they disregard those laws and contravene that order. Hence the continuance of monasteries after their utility had ceased, and the zeal in which they had originated was worn out. When those institutions were abolished in this country, there remained only the course of mercantile or military adventure (except such provision as the learned professions might afford) for the younger sons of good families; and the greater number became, during peace, idle and listless and hopeless dependents upon the* elder brother. This was an inconvenience which could not long continue in a nation at that time too far advanced for a system of clanship to grow up in it. Accordingly, in the first generation

* The best account which I have ever seen of this stage of society, is in Mr. Surtees's *History of Durham*. Vol. i. 87.

after the great religious revolution schemes of conquest from the Spaniards were attempted, which always degenerated into marauding expeditions; and in the second, projects of colonization were conceived in a better spirit, by minds* of a higher order. Lord Sterline, the poet, took possession of and gave name to Nova Scotia: an intended settlement in the island of Mauritius was only prevented by the better speed of the Dutch; and the troubles in England frustrated the scheme of an expedition for colonizing in Madagascar, which Prince Rupert was to have conducted, and afterwards the Earl of Arundel, and in which some of the choicest spirits of Charles's court would have embarked. This, had it been undertaken, must have proved a disastrous adventure, Madagascar being one of those places where the climate presents an insuperable obstacle to European colonization. An end was put to all such schemes by the civil wars, and with the Restoration a new order of things began. Commerce and trade, in many of its branches, had then become lucrative enough to be deemed honourable, and not being overdone by competition,

* I should have made an exception for Raleigh, (the greatest man engaged in any of these speculations,) if he had not been engaged in both.

afforded room for disposing of younger sons advantageously. The gradual increase of trade, and of our civil and military establishments, kept pace for more than an hundred years with the growth of population. It has ceased to do so since the ratio of mortality has diminished, . . . which it has done greatly within the last half century, owing, perhaps, as much to the more temperate habits of the middle and higher classes, as to the better mode of treatment in most diseases which improved science has introduced. But the increase of wealth, real or fictitious, (that which is fictitious producing in this case the same effect as that which is real,) has increased the number of educated persons in a very great degree beyond what was their proportion in any former age; and the multitude of persons so educated, who can find no room in their own crowded walks of life, is great and growing enough to require the anxious attention of our statesmen, if the pressing anxieties of the present time left them ever at leisure to devise measures of prospective policy.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You have spoken of polyandrianism and of convents. In what manner is your society affected (for affected it must be) by that evil for which these evils have been resorted to else-

where as remedial or palliative? Are morals better or worse among you than they were when manners were more gross?

MONTESINOS.

The latter question I must answer doubtfully. So far as morals depend upon natural disposition (upon which they must always, and almost wholly, depend where there is not a vital principle of religion) so far the morality of every age must be pretty much at the same average. Andrew Marvell says,

“ The world in all doth but two Nations bear,
The Good and Bad; ..and these mixt every where:”

it is thus with every generation also; and the difference in this point will be found, I fear, to consist less in the proportion of wickedness, than in the shape which it may assume. Not to speak of those offences which the law reaches, (though to these likewise the remark would apply,) vices as well as follies have their season, and come into fashion or go out, according to the humour of the times. There were undoubtedly, in the middle ages, more and greater crimes committed by the higher classes than by the lower, because the lower were kept in fear, and in order, and in place, whereas the others were powerful enough to

defy the laws. Time has reversed this, placing the rich in circumstances more favourable to their moral nature, and in this respect worsening, in an equal degree, the situation of the poor. But it is neither the rich nor poor who are affected by the cause concerning which you bid me inquire; it is the intermediate class. The poor perhaps are not sufficiently mindful of the proverb, which says, that they who marry in haste repent at leisure; the intermediate class, and especially such of that class as are most desirous of what is called prospering in the world, are influenced by it too much. Late marriages therefore have become as much in the order of British society, as they are out of the order of nature; they are rendered late not more often by reasonable and virtuous prudence, than by manners, which look rather to display than to comfort, and in which an expenditure that conduces neither to happiness nor true respectability, is regarded as necessary in a certain rank of life. The effect of this in the extensive and influential circle wherein it operates cannot be otherwise than injurious. A great proportion of the women who are born within that circle, wither on the thorn; it is a mournful thing to consider how many, in every generation, whom their Maker had endowed

with every requisite for domestic happiness, pass through the world thus, un blessing and unblest: though among such women some of the best specimens of human nature are to be found, . . . in saying which I speak not from theory but from knowledge. Upon the other sex the effect very generally is, and must be, evil. Many become vicious who otherwise would not have been so; and there arises this farther mischief, that, when they marry, undue motives have more than what would otherwise be their share in the engagement, on one side, or on the other: on the man's, when marrying early in life he makes money the object of his choice; on the woman's, when (more pardonably) for the sake of obtaining a settlement in life, she overlooks a disproportionate difference of years, and submits therefore to a union in which, on her part, the place of affection is to be supplied by duty . . . if it can.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

England then has ceased to be the Paradise of women!

MONTESINOS.

Was it ever so, Sir Thomas? Has this world ever been other than a place of trial, even for the best and happiest, since Paradise was lost? But if you ask me what are the worst evils in

the commonwealth, I answer, first, the state of that very numerous class who are left without instruction in their childhood, without restraint in their youth; and, were it not for the poor-laws, I should have to add, without charity in their misery and old age; secondly, the condition of women, respectably born, carefully educated, and left ill provided for, or unprovided.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The reprobates of society, (and what a reproach upon society it is, that there should be in it a class which may properly be so denominated!) if greatly more in number than they were in former times, are probably not more in proportion; but they are congregated more. Instead of being dispersed over the country, as in my days, they are collected into large towns and populous districts, as into the sinks and sewers of depravity.

MONTESINOS.

Sinks and sewers you may well call them, and yet the country is not drained by such receptacles; .. would that it were! For though knights are not more needed now to protect the husbandmen against wastours and wicked men,*

* Sykerliche, syre knyght, saide Peers thenne,

Ich shal swynke and swete and sowe for hus bothe,

than mighty hunters and hawkers are for riding them of wild fowl who used to destroy the corn, and of wild boars and stags who used to break down the fences, we are far from being sufficiently protected either in town or country. There are few places without some inhabitants who live notoriously by unlawful means and yet elude the laws, though affecting no more concealment in their practices than is just sufficient for that purpose. Sturdy vagabonds are to be found every where; and tramping beggars are continually carrying with them, from place to place, measles, small-pox and hooping-cough. Our ancestors were better protected when the leper was not allowed to go abroad without his clapper or his bell.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

It has not been for lack of laws that this evil continues, but of vigilance in those who ought to execute them, and for want of that polity, that discipline, that order, the rudiments of which

And laboure for the while thou levest, al thy lyf tyme,
In covenant that thou kepe holy churche and me selve
For wastours and wyckede men that thus worlde struen;
And go honte hardiliche to hares and to foxes,
To bores and to bockes that breketh a doune menne hegges;
And fatte thy faucones to cull wylde foules,
For thei comen to my croft my corn to defoule.

Peirs Plouhman. Passus, 9. p. 129. Whittaker's Edition.

were distinctly marked in your constitution, but from which, it may be seen, that during many generations you have been departing more and more. This, although now an old and inveterate evil, might be eradicated by vigorous treatment; and will be so whenever some long interval of peace brings it to an intolerable degree, and a cessation of faction allows your Government leisure for making the immediate good of the people its chief object. The proverb says, that when things are at the worst, they mend; this is one of those which, when at the worst, must be mended. It is also wholly within the reach of remedial laws, without requiring any previous improvement in public feeling, or change in manners, the remedy itself tending to produce both. But such an improvement and such a change must, it is to be feared, precede any sensible amendment in the condition of women so circumstanced as you have described;..to be feared, I say, because devoutly as such an amendment must be wished, it is mournful to consider how many causes are co-operating for the continuance and increase of the evil, and how little likelihood there appears of attracting the public attention to any thing that might be proposed for alleviating it. Your manners present one obstacle: on

the continent women take a much greater share in business than is usual in this country, and this without being in any degree unfitted thereby for their domestic duties, but on the contrary becoming more truly their husbands' helpmates ; with you men have intruded into many of those branches of trade which might as well, and far more becomingly, be carried on by the other sex. You endeavoured to vindicate your countrymen from the imputation of pride ; look at the charge in connection with this subject, and ask yourself, after such re-consideration, whether it may not be alleged against them with severe but perfect truth. Men are not disqualified by their engagements in trade from being received in high society ; but from the moment that a well-born or well-educated woman employs her acquirements in obtaining for herself the means of subsistence, she loses her caste. The word is odious, and so is the state of things which it implies ; but it is more odious where it exists as here, in exception to the general course of feeling, than where it is the established order, under which individuals are born, and to which therefore their habits and expectations are accommodated. How large is the number of those persons among you, who by birth, connections, profession or occupation, hold a re-

spectable station in society, deriving their means meantime mainly, if not entirely, from a life-income, or depending for support upon the yet more precarious tenure of their own exertions. The customs of the world in most cases,.. the absolute necessity in many,.. of making an appearance correspondent to their station, compels them to live to the extent of their resources; and thus upon the death of the father of a family, or the more pitiable case of his hopeless disablement, those whom he may leave, and who were dependent upon him, are at once reduced to distress and degradation. How large a proportion of the men in every profession are in this fearful predicament! Add to this, that commerce in most of its branches has been converted by the greedy spirit of the age, from a regular business of patient industry into a game of hazard; insomuch that the safety of even the most honourable, upright and careful merchant is no longer in his own keeping, but depends, in a most perilous degree, upon the conduct of others, against whose want of prudence or of principle he cannot insure, as he can against the danger of the seas! Methinks it should make a living heart ache, to think whenever this land of credit is shaken by a commercial earthquake, how many a goodly

fabric of happiness is laid in ruins; and to know how many women, who have been bred up among all the refinements of affluence, and with the expectation that their fortune was in no danger of any such reverse, are reduced to seek for themselves a scanty and precarious support, by the exercise of those talents which had been cultivated for recreation or for display; and who, while they thus earn the bread of bitterness, have but too much cause for saying with the son of Sirach, “ O Death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy!” In your hard-hearted society misfortune is not considered as affording any claim to respect, . . . scarcely to compassion. You have no convents, no religious communities in which such persons may be received and sheltered. Earth has no other asylum for them than in its own cold bosom.

MONTESINOS.

And yet these are not the griefs under which the spirit gives way and the heart breaks. In such cases such virtuous exertions are made, so much equanimity is manifested, so much goodness is seen, as to make it apparent that He

“ Who gives the burthen gives the strength to bear.”

Lord Sterline.

Happy were it for us all if we bore prosperity

as well and wisely as we endure an adverse fortune. The reason wherefore it is not so, I suppose to be, that the same disposition which in the one state ferments into pride, in the other is refined into fortitude; and that cares, which eat the heart, are less injurious to our spiritual nature than vanities that inflate it and corrupt it. “To miss the good which may be got by suffering evil,” says one* of our old divines, “is the worst of evils; to lose that gain which should be gotten by losses, is of losses the greatest; but to grow worse with suffering evil, is perdition itself.” Men are often found under this condemnation; women, I think, but seldom. The sons of perdition are more numerous than the daughters. If women are not made of finer clay, there has been more of the dew of heaven to temper it. Or is it that “though† the dews of Divine Grace fall every where, yet they lie longest in the shade;” and women, in the usual course of life, keep in the shade, while men brave the wind, seek the sunshine, and are exposed to all weathers?

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Society, though in some respects it bears hard upon women, is favourable to them in

* Barnabas Oley. Note to Jackson's Works, vol. iii. p. 672.

† Patrick's Pilgrim.

this, that their path of duty is strictly defined by its laws, and that even such of its habits as are least in accord with a religious life, intrench not upon the precincts of their religious belief. The maxim that if honour were lost among the rest of mankind, it ought still to be found in the breast of kings, was a brave one, and worthy to have proceeded from a better man than the one who uttered it. More true is it that if religion were every where else exploded, it would retain its place in the heart of woman. Wherefore is it then that this principle, of all principles the most powerful, has never been brought into action for the relief of women under such circumstances of adverse fortune as those to which, in the changes and chances of your unstable society, they are always liable? A mad woman can raise a sect among you; a profligate and revengeful one can endanger the state. How is it, and in a nation too which is so easily moved, that among all the forms which enthusiasm is continually taking,... among all the channels into which public charity is directed by individual exertions,... an end so worthy,... an object so beneficial, so needful, so pious, as that of providing a ready and honourable retreat for such persons, should have been overlooked? Zeal abounds among you :

enthusiasm,..I use the word in its virtuous sense,..is ready to answer any call that may be made upon it; and the kind of bounty which is required, overflows at this time and runs to waste. But where is the woman who shall be the Clara or Teresa of Protestant England, labouring for the certain benefit of her sex with their ardour, but without their delusion and fatal superstition, which have entailed such misery upon thousands!

MONTESINOS.

An experiment of this kind has been undertaken: it remains to be seen whether this generation will have the honour of supporting it, or the disgrace of suffering it to fail. That which is most essential, and which might have seemed most difficult to find, was found: an institutress who devotes her fortunes, her influence, and her life, to this generous purpose; and who, to every other advantage, adds that of rank. Her institution has not the sanction only, but the cordial approbation, of persons in the highest rank; but efficient patronage is still wanting; nor is it likely to obtain that general attention, and consequent support, which its general utility deserves. The likeliest chance for its being rendered permanent seems to be from

posthumous bounty, if some of those persons (and such there are in every generation) who bequeath large sums for pious purposes, should perceive that no purpose can be more pious than this.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Has it failed to obtain the attention which it deserves because it is too reasonable, or owing to any defect inherent in the scheme itself?

MONTESINOS.

I can discern in the scheme no other defect than the inevitable one that its appeal for support is made to the higher orders, and that large sums may be raised with more facility and more certainty by small contributions, among an extensive public, than by the most liberal donations that can be looked for in a limited circle. Possibly, too, the causes which you suspect may operate against it. There is no appeal to enthusiasm, none to the imagination; no sacrifices are to be made, no difficulties to be encountered, no wonders to be achieved; and, .. which is yet more unfavourable, .. no public meetings for promoting it are held; no speeches in favour of it are delivered upon platforms, and reported in newspapers; no Ladies' Committees are formed to collect

contributions; and no Vanity Fair opened in aid of the funds, under the title of a Ladies' Bazaar.*

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There is no endowment then for this Institution?

MONTESINOS.

None. It was hoped that from ten to fifteen thousand pounds might have been raised, which would have sufficed for putting it upon a permanent establishment; but though the Queen,

* "I wish," says a correspondent, "you would bestow some remarks upon the Ladies' Bazaars, Repositories, Fairs, &c...for (to say nothing of their detestable exhibitory character) you cannot think the mischief they are doing to little toy-shop-keepers, and poor women who got their bread by those knickknacks, the sale of which is now monopolized by the ladies. A friend of mine went into a shop in Burlington Arcade lately, to purchase some trifle, and on her remarking how little choice there was, the shopkeeper said, that all in her way of business were half ruined by 'the charitable Ladies,' who came and bought the first of any pretty new-invented toy, set to work themselves, and so spoilt the tradesman's market.

" 'There!' said a young lady of rank to one of her acquaintance, pointing to a young mustachioed lancer, who had just turned from the booth where she was selling her wares;.. 'there,..I have just made him pay me fifteen shillings for a pair of garters!' How should you like to see a daughter of yours acting charity in that style?"

and the late Princess Charlotte, and the other Princesses, contributed to the subscription, not five thousand were collected; and the experiment could not have been made, had it not been for the support afforded it by the Institutress, Lady Isabella King, and by those members who were able to pay a high rent for their apartments, . . . the scheme being devised for three classes, differing in point of fortune, but upon an equal footing in education, principles and manners. The wealthier members contribute, by their larger payments, to the support of the establishment: the second class pay fifty pounds each, per year, for their apartments and board; and there is a third class who, having no means of their own, though in other respects peculiarly fitted for such an institution, as well as peculiarly in need of such an asylum, are appointed to official situations, with salaries annexed. A school for female orphans, belonging to the same rank of life, is to be engrafted on the scheme, whenever funds shall be obtained for it. No habit is worn: the institution has necessarily its regulations, to which all the members are expected to conform, but there is nothing approaching to what, in your days, would have been called a rule. It must be needless to say that no vows are required, nor

even an engagement for any term of years. The scheme has succeeded upon trial, inso-much that the Queen, when she visited it, said it was a blessed asylum; and it would be as beneficial as it is practicable, if funds for extending and rendering it permanent were forthcoming.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Perhaps the scheme has not enough that is apparent. *Esse quam videri* is a wise motto for one who is worthy to wear it; but not to be sculptured over the portals of an edifice which, while intended for a pious purpose, should at the same time be a monument of high civilization. Perhaps in this plan too little is asked from those who are disposed to be its benefactors, and too little offered them in return. Let us inquire what is desirable, and what may be deemed attainable, in a country such as Great Britain is at this time. How have those eleemosynary establishments been found to answer, which have been endowed since the suppression of the monasteries?

MONTESINOS.

The good they do is by no means commensurate with the expenditure by which it is obtained. Owing in part, no doubt, to the total want of a religious character, they have

never become respectable in public opinion. Less cost than that at which the inmates in such communities are supported, might enable them to live in a manner more conformable to their inclinations, if bestowed upon them in the way of pension, as in the case of the out-pensioners of Chelsea and Greenwich. The moral effect also would be better; for, notwithstanding, the old song which tells us that

“Crabbed age and youth
Cannot dwell together,”

gradations of rank are not more beneficial in a commonwealth, than gradations of age are to the heart of man in his domestic circle. There are few people so entirely without connections, that if they derived from some eleemosynary fund a pension sufficient for their decent maintenance, they could not find some family into which for relationship, or good will and mutual convenience, they might be admitted as inmates, and where they might live in an interchange of good offices, which it is as salutary to render as to receive. Such pensions, conferring independence however humble, would confer a certain degree of respectability, the more surely because good character would be deemed as necessary a qualification for the

candidate as indigence : the best consequence, however, would be, that the pensioner would not be taken out of the sphere of human charities. For in alms houses a number of unhappy persons, unconnected with each other, are brought together, all of whom have been saddened, and the greater part too probably soured as well, by age, infirmities, and the very course of misfortunes which has brought them to such an asylum ; and there, having no other employment, their uncomfortable feelings take the form of ill-will to one another, and of querulous discontent with a situation in which they feel the sense of degradation and the uneasiness of restraint. Such establishments, however, are in no respect analogous to that of which we are speaking ; nor, indeed, could any thing be more injurious to the success of the experiment, than to have it supposed that it partook in any degree of the same character.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Right ; but useful inference is to be drawn from them ; for they show that human beings cannot live happily in constrained community of habits, without the aid of religious feeling, and without implicit obedience to a superior ; and these are things, which if they were desirable (and this may be doubted), are not to be expected

in these times. There must be a classification of relief; and in devising it for the higher classes, you may learn from these inferior establishments the propriety of requiring that the inmates of a Protestant Convent should possess each an income of her own (whether from a salary, or from other sources), otherwise the respectability of the institution could not be maintained. For poverty brings with it worse consequences than that which Juvenal pronounced to be its worst: it is not necessarily connected with meanness and sordid habits, but it leads to them so naturally, that you cannot hope to keep them apart.

MONTESINOS.

Alas for poor humanity, whose frail virtues are parched when exposed to the sun; or, if deprived of sunshine, are nipt, and wither in the shade!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Say rather, alas for human institutions! when, instead of aiming at the improvement of man's moral nature, they are at variance with it, and, favouring all its evil propensities, pamper one class of vices, and exasperate another!

In such establishments as are desired, and must, because of the necessity for them, be instituted ere long (whatever be the issue of

the present experiment), unless you become retrograde in civilization, it will not be difficult to hold a safe and even course between the too little and the too much. They will partake rather of the character of colleges than of convents. The fewer regulations the better; none beyond what are indispensable for the well being of the community: even a common table is not to be recommended: the members may better be left to choose their own society, and to make all minor arrangements among themselves. But uniformity of dress would be proper, for preventing expense and vanity, and for a visible sign, which might attract notice, and if the habit were at once grave, convenient and graceful, would ensure respect. In like manner, for the sake of effect, the domicile ought to have an appearance in character with its purpose. Your mortmain laws were necessary when they were enacted: is there any reason why they should not be repealed now that the necessity for them has ceased to exist?

MONTESINOS.

None, . . if the laws against Monks, Friars, Jesuits, and Regulars of every description, were enforced as they ought to be. They have, in some cases, frustrated good and generous intentions, and, in others, have diverted

into the hands of the lawyers no small portion of property bequeathed to better uses. Under the Land Tax Redemption Act something more than £100,000 *per annum* of Church Lands were sold, whereby thrice as much land as that rental would represent was freed from mortmain. It must be evident therefore that no inconvenience could arise (proper precautions being taken against that pestilent superstition which is spreading amongst us!)...from replacing in this kind of tenure as much land as could be required for any beneficial purposes. Not that land is to be deemed so advisable for any permanent revenue in such cases as the public funds. Experience has but too well proved that stewards are not always faithful in the care of charitable donations; and it has proved also that land so appropriated is far from being secure during the desolating course of revolution. Indeed, funded property is more likely to be recovered, by inscription in some Great Book (as in France), when the storm is past. A local habitation, therefore, is all that should be desired when a secular nunnery, or rather a college for women, is to be established; with just ground enough for use, for recreation, and for becoming ornament, . . . enough to preserve the respectability of its appearance and to pre-

vent intrusion. The spirit which built cathedrals and founded convents is not extinguished, and never will be extinct, while man retains in him a spark of the divine nature. Nor can I be persuaded, that the religion is wanting by which miracles are wrought, and mountains may be removed, when I know what has been effected in this generation by Protestant missionaries, and with what true faith and well-directed zeal they are labouring at this time.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The difficulties here to be removed are but as molehills. Money alone is wanted, .. money from the noble and the wealthy, so to be applied as would increase their means of beneficence. Were the edifice ready it might be expected that as such persons in former times founded chantries for the sake of relieving the souls of their ancestors, they would now, in prospective kindness to those of their own blood, found bursaries for such a college, reserving to themselves and their heirs the right of presentation. The building itself might be facilitated by a condition, that every benefactor who erected a set of chambers, should thereby acquire a right (alienable by will, gift, or sale, like any other property,) of nominating an inmate. Considering how greatly patronage is, and ever must be,

desired in a state of society like yours, it may reasonably be supposed, that there would be no opulent or noble family, which would not, for its own reputation, and remote interest, as well as for the satisfaction of securing to itself the sure means of doing good, while it conferred a favour, invest some of its money thus. One institution of this kind having been established, the example would be followed, and there would soon be no large town in this wealthy island, without such a Gynæceum in its vicinity, and no woman of rank and fortune but would have a bursary in her gift.

Montesinos.

The business of female education would naturally be transferred to these institutions gradually, and to the evident advantage of all parties: the parents would here be secured against the danger of trusting their daughters to the care of careless or unworthy persons; girls would have the advantage of elder society; and the class of women who are now employed in tuition, would find there the asylum which they need, the respectability of station which they deserve, and as much, or as little, as they might choose to undertake of the employment for which their talents and acquirements qualify them.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Thus then you would have all the good which nunneries pretend to offer, and which under some circumstances they have afforded. The enthusiasm which is restless in inaction would not be satisfied there: but for such enthusiasm the scheme is not intended; it is for sober piety, for the meek, the retiring and the gentle, whom nature has enabled rather to suffer than to act, and who would thus be saved from suffering, not indeed the numerous evils which flesh is heir to, but all those (and they are hardly less numerous,) which reverses of fortune bring with them. Yet, Montesinos, you must not suppose that I disparage enthusiasm, which if allied to madness, is akin to it only in the same degree that genius is; and without which nothing that is magnanimous will be contemplated, .. nothing that is above the level of every day life, or out of its course, will be attempted, .. nothing that is great will be accomplished. The material difficulties which must be overcome before a first Gynæceum can be established are, as I called them, molehills; there are moral ones in the way which will appear like mountains to the children of this world, but these an enthusiast may remove by faith and the works of faith, .. by hope and charity and exertion, by

ardour and by perseverance; without these, righteous enthusiasm is not to be found, and with them it creates the means whereby its ends are to be effected. There is work enough for it abroad and at home; work enough for all (it is of women that I am now speaking) who feel in themselves the strength of heroic virtue, and aspire to its rewards, and shrink not from the scenes into which in its exercise it would carry them. Such women you have among you; there are such, and there ever will be such in every generation. Why then have you no Beguines, no Sisters of Charity? why in the most needful, the most merciful form that charity can take, have you not yet followed the example of the French and the Netherlanders? No Vincent de Paul has been heard in your pulpits: no Louise le Gras has appeared among the daughters of Great Britain! Piety has found its way into your prisons; your hospitals are imploring it in vain; nothing is wanting in them but religious charity; and oh what a want is that! and how different would be the moral effect which these medical schools produce upon the pupils educated there, if this lamentable deficiency were supplied! I know not whether they or the patients suffer most from its absence. Many are the lives which

might be saved by it ; many are the death-beds to which it would administer a consolation that is now too often wanted ; and many are the young hearts which would be preserved, by its purifying and ennobling presence, from an infection worse than any evil influence which affects the life alone. A school of medicine ought also to be a school of Christian humanity ; when it is not so, the profession which of all others ought most to soften the heart, tends sureliest to corrupt and harden it.

MONTESINOS.

It is not to the hospitals alone that this blessed spirit of charity might be directed ; while it reformed those establishments by its presence, it would lessen the pressure upon them by seeking out the sick, and attending them in their own habitations. These measures have been ably and eloquently* recommended, and though no visible effect has yet been produced

* In a pamphlet entitled " Protestant Sisters of Charity : " a Letter addressed to the Lord Bishop of London, developing a plan for improving the arrangements at present existing for administering medical advice and visiting the sick poor, London, 1826. In Blackwood's Magazine for December, 1825 ; and in two Letters in the London Medical Gazette. The pamphlet I earnestly recommend to my readers notice ; the two Letters and an extract from the Magazine will be found appended to the volume.

by the appeal, the seed which has been cast upon the waters, will be found after many days.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Thy pulse, Montesinos, plays not as it was wont to do in youth! otherwise, there would not have been that expression of cold contented patience, in a case where there are no difficulties but what earnest ardour may overcome. Disease and wretchedness are as constant in their course as time; the compassion, the tenderness, . . . whereby, in a far greater degree than by any human skill when these are wanting, they are to be alleviated and lessened, exist among you, but they are latent and require to be called forth and put in action. And until this be done, it is the duty of those to whom the pulpit or the press is open, if they feel as they ought to do for their suffering fellow-creatures, to awaken these virtues, and direct into useful channels the enthusiasm which too often runs wild and goes to waste.

MONTESINOS.

A call of this kind must not be looked for from the pulpit, at least not from the Church pulpits. To make it there would require a spirit of enthusiasm, which they, whose duty it is to keep things in order, and within their appointed bounds, seek always to repress.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Say rather to regulate than to repress, . . for woe to the Church in which that spirit should be quenched! It is in the nature of things that the still waters of an establishment should have a tendency to stagnate: they would cease to be living waters, if they were not sometimes, like the pool of Bethesda, troubled by an Angel!

MONTESINOS.

The Church pulpits would not be silent, when an appeal was to be made, in support of such a scheme, to that charity which consists in alms-giving. They would make the appeal powerfully, and it would be cheerfully answered. But the impulse must first be given by some moving mind, . . by some one "blessed above women," who has set her heart on heaven, yet feels that the praise of men may sometimes be necessary for effecting a great work of goodness; and that it may be part of her duty to leave behind her, in this world, a stirring and illustrious example, . . that which has been called the last infirmity of noble minds, becoming here the righteous ambition and wise desire of a sanctified one.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Know you such a woman?

MONTESINOS.

One such is known at this time in our prisons : had her zeal taken this direction, all that we are now desiderating would have been done. I have another in my mind's eye ; ..one who has been the liveliest of the lively, the gayest of the gay ; admired for her talents by those who knew her only in her writings, and esteemed for her worth by those who were acquainted with her in the relations of private life ; one who, having grown up in the laxest sect of semi-Christians, felt the necessity of vital religion, while attending upon her father with dutiful affection, during the long and painful infirmities of his old age ; and who has now joined a sect, distinguished from all others by its formalities and enthusiasm, because it was among its members that she first found the lively faith for which her soul thirsted. She has assumed the garb, and even the shibboleth of the sect, not losing in the change her warmth of heart and cheerfulness of spirit, nor gaining by it any increase of sincerity and frankness, ..for with these nature had endued her, and society, even that of the great, had not corrupted them. The resolution, the activity, the genius, the benevolence, which are required for such a work, are to be found in her : and were she present in

person, as she is in imagination, I would say to her ... Thou art the woman !

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You look to sectarians for the service which is thus to be rendered to humanity. Is this a virtual confession, that it would be vain to hope for such a manifestation of benevolence among the members of the national Church ?

MONTESINOS.

Supposing the religious feeling in the individual to be equally ardent, the circumstances equally fitting, and the personal qualifications alike, I should expect that among the Quakers, rather than any other community, persons would be found to take up a project like this, with the ardour that is required for it ; because their institutions favour both the disposition and the direction of it. A Quakeress does not extravagante when she engages in such an enterprise, as that of attempting to reform the wretched inhabitants of a London prison : she not only believes herself to be keeping the straight path of duty when upon such a pursuit, but is confirmed in that belief by the principles of her sect, and the opinion of the little world in which she moves ; in many of her own faith she meets with active co-operation as well as sincere sympathy, a still greater number

regard her with admiration, and to the whole body, both in America and Great Britain, she becomes an object of respect and honour and pride. The discipline of the Quakers which breaks in its members to habits of quietude, forbearance, meekness and exemplary self-command, allows large license to enthusiasm, and indeed, sets no bounds to it when it takes the course of benevolent exertion. Among us it would require a high degree of excitement, for a woman, however beneficent and pious, to venture upon what a Quakeress would undertake in her habitual state of mind: the former would incur the reproach, or the suspicion of insanity, for what, if done by the latter, would call forth no surprize. The usages of society restrain us here, more perhaps than the spirit of our Church, which however tends insensibly to torpify what it always avoids to stimulate.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

*Ex illo retro fluere et sublapsa referri
Res Danaum !*

MONTESINOS.

I would reply to the Trojan who should tell me so, that its tide is not ebbing, but holds on in the quietness of its even course, a deep and mighty stream, *in omne volubilis ævum*. If the a tendency of the national Church is to produce

sober uniformity of which torpor or indifference is the besetting sin, rather than to excite or encourage what may be called an extramundane zeal, this has not arisen from any mispersuasion, or error prepense. There has been no lack of heroic virtue in the English Church, whenever unhappy times have called for its manifestation : witness the noble army of its martyrs under the bloody reign ; witness its confessors during the Great Rebellion ; witness the resistance, in the next generation, to those measures which, if not so resisted, would have re-established popery and arbitrary power in these kingdoms. In forming, or rather in reforming, our ecclesiastical establishment, Cranmer and Ridley, and their more fortunate successors, had on the one hand to guard against the pomps and vanities of Romish superstition, on the other, against the extravagances of enthusiasm, running wild as soon as it had broken its reins : but they were doubly fearful of enthusiasm, because they saw on both sides the evils and abominations to which it may be perverted ; for the frantic crimes of the Anabaptists are not more revolting than the blasphemous legends which the Romish Church has sent abroad and ratified with the stamp of its infallibility, whenever some wretched friar, or nun, was found insane

enough to be its tool, or impious enough to become its agent. Thus it has come to pass, that in its righteous desire of shunning all evil, or occasion of evil, our Church has foregone a powerful, though a dangerous means of doing good. For the same reason that we have had no Ida of Louvain, no Catharine of Sienna or Bologna, no Veronica, no Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, no Sister Providence or Sister Nativité,..for that same reason we have had no Louise de Gras.

Wherefore Protestantism has not had its Beguines, may thus be explained with regard to England. The community had no establishment here before the Reformation, and for the reason which has been assigned, its institution afterwards was not to be expected; but why they are not found in the Protestant parts of the continent, is a question which cannot be answered so creditably for the Reformed Churches. Nothing in ecclesiastical history is more uncertain than the origin of the Beguines. Their numbers were greatly increased during the Crusades; for very many women of the higher and middle ranks, being, in that age of enthusiastic military devotion, left by their husbands and other natural protectors, enrolled themselves for security in a sisterhood, who enjoyed

the respectability and comparative safety of a religious order, but were neither bound by vows, nor subjected to any unnatural austerities. But because of these exemptions, and also because, being a most useful society, they were favoured by the people, they became objects of jealousy to the whole regimented forces of the Romish Church. The nuns hated them because they envied their liberty. The Tertiaries, both Dominican and Franciscan, regarded them as rivals in public opinion, and thus drew upon them the enmity of the two great mendicant orders, who never acted with unanimity except it was to persecute, and then they always heartily co-operated. The clergy discountenanced and opposed them, thinking every thing ill bestowed which was not bestowed upon themselves; and the Beguines, deservedly popular as they were, had to contend against the selfishness of common nature, ..for persons, who would have been well pleased if a female relation took the veil as a nun, opposed her entrance into a Beguinage, because in that case, not becoming dead to the world, she retained her property. These concurring causes drew on them much vexation, and no small share of persecution; notwithstanding which they became so numerous, that in the fourteenth century the

Bishop of Strasburg estimated them at 200,000. Among such numbers, where the forlorn sought for protection, the unhappy and the bereaved for the peace of mind which accompanies the consciousness of being virtuously employed, and the enthusiastic for sympathy and for the opportunity of laying up a treasure of good works, there it must needs have been that many would seek admission for mixed motives, and with less worthy intentions, and that licentiousness would sometimes be found under the hood and habit of hypocrisy. The abuses which thus occurred were incident to the order, not arising (as in convents) from an original error in its constitution, and therefore inherent in it; they were remedied by a prudent law, prescribing that no woman should be admitted into the community till she was forty years of age. When the Beghards were persecuted, the Beguines came under the same imputation of heresy, and both were said to have derived their heretical opinions from reading the Scriptures in their own tongue. Many of the Beghards, in the hope of escaping martyrdom, took shelter in the ranks of the Observant Franciscans, a limb of the Seraphic tree, whose branches continually afforded loppings for the bonfires of the Inquisition; but at the Reformation,

both Beghards and Beguines, throughout Germany, very generally became Lutherans. The Beghards are heard of no more; how it came to pass that the Beguines should from that time have continued to exist exclusively as a Romish community, is thus to be explained,..that in Roman Catholic countries they continued to hold their possessions, while in those parts of the continent where the Reformation prevailed, the rapacity which impoverished the Church made no distinction between them and the superstitious orders; such sisters, therefore, in those parts, as adhered to the Romish Church, or who, regarding little the difference of belief, were dutifully attached to their own way of life, removed to the Beguinages which had escaped the storm.* They were then favoured instead

* The best account of the Beguines is in Mosheim's posthumous work *De Beghardis et Beguinabus*. (Lipsiæ, 1790.) He has very well characterised the work of his predecessor Ryckel, in which there is a great deal of curious matter, with the least possible information concerning the real history of the order. The title of this book is, *Vita S. Beggæ, Ducissæ Brabantie, Andetennensium, Begginarum et Beggardorum Fundatricis: vetus, hactenus non edita, et Commentario illustrata. Adjuncta est Historia Begginasiorum Belgii. Auctore Josepho Geldolpho a Ryckel ab Oorbeeck, Abbate S. Gertrudis Lovaniensis. Lovanii. 1631.* (small 4to.) Another work of Ryckel's should accompany it, *Historia S. Gertrudis, Principis Virginis, Primæ*

of being persecuted as in former times; and there they have continued to flourish, for the credit of the Romish Church, and for the good of humanity. Scandal has ceased to attack them; and though they were plundered during the first years of the Revolution, yet even then their utility was so generally acknowledged, that (like the Hospital Nuns in France) they were supported by public feeling against the madness of the times.

The Protestants were formerly reproached for making no exertions to spread the Gospel among heathen nations. That reproach has been done away. Within the course of thirty years, I have seen the unpromising commencement of the Protestant missions, their patient progress, and the success with which God is blessing them. Thirty years hence this other reproach may also be effaced, and England have its Beguines and its Sisters of Charity. It is grievously in need of them! There is nothing Romish, nothing superstitious, nothing fanatical in such associations; nothing but what is

Nivellensis Abbatissæ. Notis et figuris æneis subinde illustrata operâ et impensâ Josephi Gerdolphi a Ryckel, Abbatis S. Gertrudis Lovanii. Bruxellæ, 1637. (small 4to.) These crude, curious and amusing works, written by a man of much learning and more credulity, are rarely to be procured.

righteous and holy; nothing but what properly belongs to that *θρησκεία*, that religious service which the Apostle James, the brother of our Lord, has told us is pure and undefiled before God and the Father. They who shall see such societies instituted and flourishing here, may have a better hope that it may please the Almighty to continue his manifold mercies to this island, notwithstanding the errors which endanger it, and the offences which cry to Heaven.*

* I will add here an account of the Beguinage in Ghent, extracted from a journal written in 1815.

“ The most interesting object in Ghent to me, and indeed the most remarkable, is the Beguinage, which is the principal establishment of the order, and very much the largest. It is at one end of the city and entirely enclosed, being indeed a little town of itself. You enter through a gateway, over which there is an image of Queen St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the Patron Saint, or Saint-Patroness of the institution. The space inclosed cannot be less than the area of the whole town of Keswick; but the Beguinage is unlike alms-house, college, village or town. It is a collection of contiguous houses of different sizes, each with a small garden in front, and a high well-built brick wall inclosing them all. Upon every door is the name, not of the tenants, but of the Saint under whose protection the tenement is placed; there is no opening in the door through which any thing can be seen, so that in this respect the clausure is complete. There are several streets thus built, with houses on both sides. The silence and solitude of such streets may

easily be imagined, and the effect is very striking upon entering there from the busy streets of Ghent: you seem to be in a different world. There is a large church within the precincts; a burial ground, in which there are no monuments; a branch from one of the many rivers or canals wherewith Ghent is intersected, in which the washing of the community is performed, from a large boat; and a large piece of ground planted with trees, where the clothes are dried.

“ Our appearance here, and the evident curiosity with which we were perambulating a place seldom visited by strangers, attracted notice; and we were at length courteously accosted by a sister, who proved to be the second personage in the community. She showed us the interior, and gave us such explanations as we desired. It is curious that she seemed to know nothing of the origin of the order, nor by whom it is said to have been founded; nor could she refer me to any book containing either its history or its rule.

“ According to this lady, there are at this time about six thousand Beguines in Brabant and Flanders, to which countries they are confined; six hundred and twenty of these are resident here. They were rich before the Revolution; then, in the general spoliation, their lands were taken from them, and they were commanded to lay aside their distinguishing dress; but this mandate was only obeyed in part, because public opinion, even then, was strongly in their favour, and they were of such manifest utility to all ranks, that very few, however otherwise malignant, were disposed to injure them. They receive the sick who come to them for succour, and they support as well as attend them as long as the case may require. They go out also to nurse the sick, when their services are asked for. They are not bound by any vows, and Madame Devolder (this was the name of our obliging informant) assured us with an air of becoming pride, that no instance of a Beguine withdrawing from the order had ever been

known. The reason was obvious; the institution is in itself reasonable and useful, as well as humane and religious; no person is compelled to enter it, because there is no vow, no clausure, and no person who wished to withdraw could be compelled to stay: and I suppose their numbers are generally, if not wholly, filled up by women who, when their youth is gone by, seek a retirement, or need an asylum, from the world. Madame Devolder herself entered after the death of her husband. The property which a Beguine brings with her, reverts to her heirs at law upon her decease.

“ During the Revolution, the church of this Beguinage was sold, as being confiscated property belonging to a suppressed order. The sale was a mere device, or in English phrase a job, to accommodate some partizan of the ruling demagogues with ready money. Such a person bought it for a nominal price, and in the course of two or three weeks sold it for 300 Louis-d’or to Madame Devolder and another sister; who, as soon as they could, made it over once more to the community.

“ The sisters dine in the Refectory if they please, but any one who chooses may have dinner sent from thence to her own apartments. We were taken into three of these chambers; they are small, and furnished with little more than necessary comforts, but those comforts are there, and they are remarkably clean. In one, a sister who has been bedridden many years, was sitting up in bed, knitting: we were introduced into her chamber, because Madame Devolder said, it amused her to see visitors, though she could not converse with us, for she spoke no French, and there was no Flemish tongue in our party. Two sisters were spinning in another chamber, one of whom was 83 years of age, the other 85.

“ The habit of the Beguines is not inconvenient, but it is abominably ugly; as the habit of every female order is, I believe, without exception.”

Ryckel (§ 71, p. 315) says, this Beguinage was founded

about the year 1234, by Joanna and Margareta, countesses of Flanders. None of the present buildings appear to be as old as his own days; the former edifices were probably destroyed during some of the sieges which Ghent has sustained. Before the religious wars, he says, it had sometimes contained 700 inhabitants, when he wrote they did not exceed 400. *Est locus amplissimus trium et amplius bonariorum terræ. Additus et amplitudini decor; adeo ut qui multa viderunt, fateantur se pulchrius nullum vidisse. Olim à prima sua origine fuit extimum civitati, nunc intra pomæria conclusum est.*

COLLOQUY XIV.

THE LIBRARY.

I WAS in my library, making room upon the shelves for some books which had just arrived from New England, removing to a less conspicuous station others which were of less value and in worse dress, when Sir Thomas entered. You are employed, said he, to your heart's content. Why, Montesinos, with these books, and the delight you take in their constant society, what have you to covet or desire ?

MONTESINOS.

Nothing,..except more books.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Crescit, indulgens sibi, dirus hydrops.

MONTESINOS.

Nay, nay, my ghostly monitor, this at least is no diseased desire ! If I covet more, it is for the want I feel and the use which I should make of them. “ Libraries,” says my good old friend George Dyer, a man as learned as he

is benevolent, . . . “ libraries are the wardrobes of literature, whence men, properly informed, might bring forth something for ornament, much for curiosity, and more for use.”* These books of mine, as you well know, are not drawn up here for display, however much the pride of the eye may be gratified in beholding them; they are on actual service. Whenever they may be dispersed, there is not one among them that will ever be more comfortably lodged, or more highly prized by its possessor; and generations may pass away before some of them will again find a reader. . . It is well that we do not moralize too much upon such subjects, . .

For foresight is a melancholy gift,
Which bares the bald, and speeds the all-too-swift.

H. T.

But the dispersion of a library, whether in retrospect or in anticipation, is always to me a melancholy thing.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

How many such dispersions must have taken place to have made it possible that these books should thus be brought together here among the Cumberland mountains !

MONTESINOS.

Many, indeed; and in many instances most

* History of Cambridge, vol. i. p. 6.

disastrous ones. Not a few of these volumes have been cast up from the wreck of the family or convent libraries during the late Revolution. Yonder *Acta Sanctorum* belonged to the Capuchines, at Ghent. This book of St. Bridget's Revelations, in which not only all the initial letters are illuminated, but every capital throughout the volume was coloured, came from the Carmelite Nunnery at Bruges. That copy of Alain Chartier, from the Jesuits' College at Louvain; that *Imago Primi Sæculi Societatis*, from their college at Ruremond. Here are books from Colbert's library; here others from the Lamoignon one. And here are two volumes of a work,* not more rare than valuable for its contents, divorced, unhappily, and it is to be feared, for ever, from the one which should stand between them; they were printed in a convent at Manila, and brought from thence when that city was taken by Sir William Draper; they have given me, perhaps, as many pleasurable hours, (past in acquiring information which I could not otherwise have obtained,) as Sir William spent years of anxiety and vexation in vainly soliciting the reward of his conquest.

* Chronicles of the bare-footed Franciscans in the Philipines, China, Japan, &c. I am indebted for this very curious book to the kindness of my friend Sir Robert Harry Inglis.

About a score of the more out-of-the-way works in my possession, belonged to some unknown person, who seems carefully to have gleaned the book-stalls a little before and after the year 1790. He marked them with certain ciphers, always at the end of the volume. They are in various languages, and I never found his mark in any book that was not worth buying, or that I should not have bought without that indication to induce me. All were in ragged condition, and having been dispersed, upon the owner's death probably, as of no value, to the stalls they had returned; and there I found this portion of them, just before my old haunts as a book-hunter in the metropolis were disforested, to make room for the improvements between Westminster and Oxford Road. I have endeavoured, without success, to discover the name of their former possessor. He must have been a remarkable man; and the whole of his collection, judging of it by that part which has come into my hands, must have been singularly curious. A book is the more valuable to me when I know to whom it has belonged, and through what "scenes and changes" it has past.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You would have its history recorded in the fly leaf, as carefully as the pedigree of a race-horse is preserved.

MONTESINOS.

I confess that I have much of that feeling in which the superstition concerning relics has originated; and I am sorry when I see the name of a former owner obliterated in a book, or the plate of his arms defaced. Poor memorials though they be, yet they are something saved for awhile from oblivion; and I should be almost as unwilling to destroy them, as to efface the *Hic jacet* of a tombstone. There may be sometimes a pleasure in recognizing them, sometimes a salutary sadness.

Yonder Chronicle of King D. Manoel, by Damiam de Goes, and yonder General History of Spain, by Esteban de Garibay, are signed by their respective authors. The minds of these laborious and useful scholars are in their works; but you are brought into a more personal relation with them when you see the page upon which you know that their eyes have rested and the very characters which their hands have traced. This copy of Casaubon's Epistles was sent to me from Florence, by Walter Landor, He had perused it carefully, and to that perusal we are indebted for one of the most pleasing of his Conversations: these letters had carried him in spirit to the age of their writer, and shown James I. to him in the light wherein

James was regarded by contemporary scholars; and under the impression thus produced, Landor has written of him in his happiest mood, calmly, philosophically, feelingly, and with no more of favourable leaning than justice will always manifest when justice is in good humour and in charity with all men. The book came from the palace library at Milan, ..how, or when abstracted, I know not; but this beautiful dialogue would never have been written had it remained there in its place upon the shelf, for the worms to finish the work which they had begun. Isaac Casaubon must be in your society, Sir Thomas, ..for where Erasmus is, you will be, and there also Casaubon will have his place among the wise and the good. Tell him, I pray you, that due honour has in these days been rendered to his name by one who, as a scholar, is qualified to appreciate his merits, and whose writings will be more durable than monuments of brass or marble.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Is there no message to him from Walter Landor's friend?

MONTESINOS.

Say to him, since you encourage me to such boldness, that his letters could scarcely have been perused with deeper interest by the per-

sons to whom they were addressed, than they have been by one, at the foot of Skiddaw, who is never more contentedly employed than when learning from the living minds of other ages; one who would gladly have this expression of respect and gratitude conveyed to him; and who trusts that when his course is finished here, he shall see him face to face.

Here is a book with which Lauderdale amused himself, when Cromwell kept him prisoner in Windsor Castle: he has recorded his state of mind during that imprisonment by inscribing in it, with his name, and the dates* of time and place, the Latin word *Durate*, and the Greek Ὀπισθέον καὶ ἐλπιστέον... Here is a memorial of a different kind inscribed in this “Rule† of Penance of St. Francis, as it is ordered for religious women.”.. “I beseech my deare mother humbly to accept of this exposition of our holy rule, the better to conceive what your poor child ought to be, who daly beges your blessing. Constantia Francisco.”.. And here in the *Apophthegmata*, collected by Conrad Lycos-

* The date is 22 Oct. 1657. The book is the *Pia Hilaria Angelini Gazæi*, of which an edition in two volumes, 12mo. was that year published in London by R. Pepper, of Christ's College, Cambridge.

† Douay, 1644.

thenes, and published after drastic expurgation, by the Jesuits, as a common place book, some Portugueze has entered a hearty vow* that he would never part with the book, nor lend it to any one... Very different was the disposition of my poor old Lisbon acquaintance, the Abbé, who, after the old humaner form, wrote in all his books (and he had a rare collection) *Ex libris Francisci Garnier, et amicorum*.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

How peaceably they stand together,.. Papists and Protestants side by side!

MONTESINOS.

Their very dust reposes not more quietly in the cemetery. Ancient and Modern, Jew and Gentile, Mahommedan and Crusader, French and English, Spaniards and Portugueze, Dutch and Brazilians, fighting their old battles, silently now, upon the same shelf: Fernam Lopez and Pedro de Ayala; John de Laet and Barlæus, with the historians of Joam Fernandes Vieira; Fox's Martyrs and the Three Conversions of Father Persons; Cranmer and Stephen Gardiner; Dominican and Franciscan; Jesuit and *Philosophe* (equally mis-

* *Faço voto a Jesu Christo da não largar este livro da mão e emprestalhe a alguem.* Anno Dni. 1664.



Drawn by W. Westall A.R.A.

Engraved by W. R. Smith.

named); Churchmen and Sectarians; Round-heads and Cavaliers!

Here are God's conduits, grave divines; and here
Is nature's secretary, the philosopher:
And wily statesmen, which teach how to tie
The sinews of a city's mystic body;
Here gathering chroniclers; and by them stand
Giddy fantastic poets of each land.

DONNE.

Here I possess these gathered treasures of time,
the harvest of so many generations, laid up in
my garners: and when I go to the window
there is the lake, and the circle of the moun-
tains, and the illimitable sky.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Felicemque voco pariter studiique locique!

MONTESINOS.

— *meritoque probas artesque locumque.*

The simile of the bees,

Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes,

has often been applied to men who have made literature their profession; and they among them to whom worldly wealth and worldly honours are objects of ambition, may have reason enough to acknowledge its applicability. But it will bear a happier application and with equal fitness: for, for whom is the purest honey hoarded that the bees of this world elaborate,

if it be not for the man of letters? The exploits of the kings and heroes of old, serve now to fill story books for his amusement and instruction. It was to delight his leisure and call forth his admiration that Homer sang, and Alexander conquered. It is to gratify his curiosity that adventurers have traversed deserts and savage countries, and navigators have explored the seas from pole to pole. The revolutions of the planet which he inhabits are but matters for his speculation; and the deluges and conflagrations which it has undergone, problems to exercise his philosophy, . . or fancy. He is the inheritor of whatever has been discovered by persevering labour, or created by inventive genius. The wise of all ages have heaped up a treasure for him, which rust doth not corrupt, and which thieves cannot break through and steal . . . I must leave out the moth, . . for even in this climate care is required against its ravages.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Yet, Montesinos, how often does the worm-eaten volume outlast the reputation of the worm-eaten author!

MONTESINOS.

Of the living one also; for many there are of

whom it may be said, in the words of Vida, that . . .

— *ipsi*

*Sæpe suis superant monumentis ; illaudatique
Extremum ante diem fœtus flevēre caducos,
Viventesque suæ viderunt funera famæ.*

Some literary reputations die in the birth ; a few are nibbled to death by critics, . . but they are weakly ones that perish thus, such only as must otherwise soon have come to a natural death. Somewhat more numerous are those which are overfed with praise, and die of the surfeit. Brisk reputations, indeed, are like bottled twopenny, or pop, . . “ they sparkle, are exhaled, and fly,” . . not to heaven, but to the Limbo. To live among books, is in this respect like living among the tombs ; . . you have in them speaking remembrancers of mortality. “ Behold this also is * vanity !”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Has it proved to you “ vexation of spirit” also ?

* “ If, says Bishop Bull, we would have our hearts brought off to God, and the serious pursuit of eternal things, let us daily study the vanity of this world. . . . Study it, did I say ? . . There seems little need of study, or deep search into this matter. This is a thing that thrusts itself upon our thoughts, so that we must think of it, unless we thrust it from us.”—
Vol. i. p. 211.

MONTESINOS.

Oh no! for never can any man's life have been past more in accord with his own inclinations, nor more answerably to his own desires. Excepting that peace which, through God's infinite mercy, is derived from a higher source, it is to literature, humanly speaking, that I am beholden, not only for the means of subsistence, but for every blessing which I enjoy ; . . health of mind and activity of mind, contentment, cheerfulness, continual employment, and therewith continual pleasure. *Suavissima vita indies sentire se fieri meliorem*; and this as Bacon has said, and Clarendon repeated, is the benefit that a studious man enjoys in retirement. To the studies which I have faithfully pursued, I am indebted for friends with whom, hereafter, it will be deemed an honour to have lived in friendship ; and as for the enemies which they have procured to me in sufficient numbers, . . happily I am not of the thin-skinned race: they might as well fire small shot at a rhinoceros, as direct their attacks* upon me. *In omnibus*

* “ *De odio improborum adversus pietatem, non est quod te tantopere moveat: hoc debbat, si hoc novum esset, bonos primum nunc ab improbis lacessi. A Deo incipiunt ; in nos mitiores esse non possunt. Ego in hac militiâ veteranus sum. Scaliger, Isacio Casaubono. Epist. p. 165.*

requiem quæsi, said Thomas à Kempis, *sed non inveni nisi in angulis et libellis*. I too have found repose where he did, in books and retirement, but it was there alone I sought it: to these my nature, under the direction of a merciful Providence, led me betimes, and the world can offer nothing which should tempt me from them.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

If wisdom were to be found in the multitude of books, what a progress must this nation have made in it since my head was cut off! A man in my days might offer to dispute *de omni scibile*, and in accepting the challenge I, as a young man, was not guilty of any extraordinary presumption, for all which books could teach was, at that time, within the compass of a diligent and ardent student. Even then we had difficulties to contend with which were unknown to the ancients. The curse of Babel fell lightly upon them. The Greeks despised other nations too much, to think of acquiring their languages for the love of knowledge, and the Romans contented themselves with learning only the Greek. But tongues which, in my life time, were hardly formed, have since been refined and cultivated, and are become fertile in authors; and others, the very names of which were then unknown in Europe, have been discovered and mastered

by European scholars, and have been found rich in literature. The circle of knowledge has thus widened in every generation; and you cannot now touch the circumference of what might formerly have been claspt.

MONTESINOS.

We are fortunate, methinks, who live in an age when books are accessible and numerous, and yet not so multiplied as to render a competent, not to say thorough acquaintance with any one branch of literature, impossible. He has it yet in his power to know much, who can be contented to remain in ignorance of more, and to say with Scaliger, *non sum ex illis gloriosis qui nihil ignorant*.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

If one of the most learned men whom the world has ever seen, felt it becoming in him to say this two centuries ago, how infinitely smaller in these days must the share of learning, which the most indefatigable student can hope to attain, be in proportion to what he must wish to learn! The sciences are simplified as they are improved; old rubbish and demolished fabrics serve there to make a foundation for new scaffolding, and more enduring superstructures; and every discoverer in physics bequeaths to those who follow him, greater advantages than

he possessed at the commencement of his labours. The reverse of this is felt in all the higher branches of literature. You have to acquire what the learned of the last age acquired, and in addition to it, what they themselves have added to the stock of learning: thus the task is greater in every succeeding generation, and in a very few more it must become manifestly impossible.

MONTESINOS.

Pope Ganganelli is said to have expressed a whimsical opinion, that all the books in the world might be reduced to six thousand volumes in folio,..by epitomizing, expurgating, and destroying whatever the chosen and plenipotentia! committee of literature should in their wisdom think proper to condemn. It is some consolation to know that no Pope, or Nero, or Buonaparte, however great their power, can ever think such a scheme sufficiently within the bounds of possibility, for them to dream of attempting it;..otherwise the will would not be wanting. The evil which you anticipate is already perceptible in its effects. Well would it be if men were as moderate in their desire of wealth, as those who enter the ranks of literature, and lay claim to distinction there, are in their desire of knowledge! A

slender capital suffices to begin with, upon the strength of which they claim credit, and obtain it as readily as their fellow adventurers in trade. If they succeed in setting up a present reputation, their ambition extends no further. The very vanity which finds its present food, produces in them a practical contempt for any fame beyond what they can live to enjoy; and this sense of its insignificance to themselves, is what better minds hardly attain, even in their saddest wisdom, till this world darkens upon them, and they feel that they are on the confines of eternity. But every age has had its sciolists, and will continue to have them; and in every age literature has also had, and will continue to have its sincere and devoted followers, few in number, but enough to trim the everlasting lamp. It is when sciolists meddle with state affairs that they become the pests of a nation; and this evil, for the reason which you have assigned, is more likely to increase than to be diminished. In your days all extant history lay within compassable bounds: it is a fearful thing to consider now what length of time would be required, to make a studious man as conversant with the history of Europe since those days, as he ought to be, if he would be properly qualified for holding a place in the

councils of a kingdom. Men who take the course of public life will not, nor can they be expected to, wait for this. Youth and ardour, and ambition and impatience, are here in accord with worldly prudence; if they would reach the goal for which they start, they must begin the career betimes; and such among them as may be conscious that their stock of knowledge is less than it ought to be for such a profession, would not hesitate on that account to take an active part in public affairs, because they have a more comfortable consciousness, that they are quite as well informed as the* contemporaries, with whom they shall have to act, or to con-

* The Comte de Puisaye speaking in his Memoirs of "*l'étonnante multiplicité de prétentions que les approches de la révolution firent naître;*" observes, "*c'est cette égalité de faiblesse, cette monotonie, si j'ose m'exprimer ainsi, d'impuissance ou de médiocrité, qui enhardissent l'ignorance et la présomption.*" Not many days after the Chamber of Nobles had begun their sittings, "*un homme de la cour,*" he proceeds to say, "*auprès de qui le hasard m'avoit placé, me fit part de la satisfaction qu'il éprouvoit, de n'avoir rien entendu, disoit-il, qui pût l'intimider; et je commence à croire, ajouta-t-il, que je serai de force.... Cette légèreté fit sur mon esprit une impression que la suite des evenemens a été peu propre à effacer. Seroit-il donc vrai qu'il n'a manqué qu'un homme d'un vrai talent, qu'un homme de génie, pour intimider, pour forcer au silence, ces parleurs à tout propos, qui se sont tant de fois disputé la tribune; et pour détourner de dessus leurs têtes, de dessus de celles de leurs familles,*

tend. The *quantulum* at which Oxenstern admired would be a large allowance now. For any such person to suspect himself of deficiency would, in this age of pretension, be a hopeful symptom; but should he endeavour to supply it, he is like the mail coach traveller, who is to be conveyed over macadamized roads at the rate of nine miles an hour, including stoppages, and must therefore take at his minuted meals whatever food is readiest. He must get information for immediate use, and with the smallest cost of time; and therefore it is sought in abstracts and epitomes, which afford meagre food to the intellect, though they take away the uneasy sense of inanition. *Tout abrégé sur un bon livre est un sot abrégé*, says Montagne; and of all abridgements there are none by which a reader is so liable, and so likely, to be deceived as by epitomized histories.

et de leurs concitoyens, une partie des maux que leur sottise vanité y a accumulés !"—T. i. 222.

Nothing better than the two first volumes of these *Memoirs* has been written concerning the causes and commencement of the French Revolution: the latter volumes relate to the miserable intrigues of the emigrant court. I believe Puisaye to have been a much-injured, as well as a most able man. I never remember to have met with any person whose eye indicated more sagacity, nor whose countenance would more readily have obtained confidence, from any one who was accustomed to trust the credentials of nature.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Call to mind I pray you, my foliophagous friend, what was the extent of Michael Montagne's library; and that if you had past a winter in his chateau, you must, with that appetite of yours, have put yourself upon short allowance there. Historical knowledge is not the first thing needful for a statesman, nor the second. And yet do not hastily conclude, that I am about to disparage its importance. A sailor might as well put to sea without chart or compass, as a minister venture to steer the ship of the state without it. For as "the strong and strange* varieties" in human nature are repeated in every age, so "the thing which hath been, it is that which shall be. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new†?...it hath been already of old time which was before ‡ us."

MONTESINOS.

For things forepast are precedents to us,
Whereby we may things present now, discuss,

* Lord Brooke.

† Ecclesiastes, i. 9, 10.

‡ "...vedi che mutati sono i visi degli uomini, ed i colori estrinseci; le cose medesime tutte ritornano, nè vediamo accidente alcuno, che a altri tempi non sia stato veduto."—Guicciardini in a Letter to Machiavelli. Opere di Machiavelli, 1813. Vol. viii. 160.

as the old * poet said who brought together a tragical collection of precedents in the Mirror of Magistrates. This is what Lord Brooke calls

the second light of government

Which stories yield, and no time can disseason :

“ the common standard of man’s reason,” he holds to be the first light which the founders of a new state, or the governors of an old one, ought to follow.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Rightly : for though the most sagacious author that ever deduced maxims of policy from the experience of former ages, has said † that the misgovernment of states, and the evils consequent thereon, have arisen more from the

* Thomas Newton.

† Machiavelli, Discorsi sopra Livio. Vol. iii. p. 7.

“ *Ei si conosce facilmente per chi considera le cose presenti e le antiche, comè in tutte le città e in tutti i popoli sono quelli medesimi desiderj, e quelli medesimi umori, e come vi furono sempre. In modo ch’ egli è facil cosa a chi esamina con diligenza le cose passate, prevedere in ogni repubblica le future, e farvi quelli remedj, che dagli antichi sono stati usati, o non ne trovando degli usati, pensarne de nuovi, per la similitudine degli accidenti. Ma perchè queste considerazioni sono neglette, o non intese da chi legge, o se le sono intese, non sono conosciute da chi governa, ne seguita che sempre sono i medesimi scandoli in ogni tempo.*”—Ib. ib. p. 120.

neglect of that experience, . . . that is, from historical ignorance, . . . than from any other cause, the sum and substance of historical knowledge for practical purposes consists in certain general principles : and he who understands those principles, and has a due sense of their importance, has always, in the darkest circumstances, a star in sight by which he may direct his course surely.

MONTESINOS.

The British ministers who began and conducted the first war against revolutionary France, were once reminded in a memorable* speech, that if they had known, or knowing had borne in mind, three maxims of Machiavelli, they would not have committed the errors which cost this country so dearly. They would

* By Mr. Nicholls, Parl. History, Vol. xxxvi. 599. He is there represented as referring to “ a late writer,” but it was to Machiavelli that he referred, who has one chapter in his Discourses on Livy (lib. ii. c. 25.) showing, “ *Che lo assaltare una città disunita, per occuparla mediante sua disunione, è partito contrario :*” and another (lib. ii. c. 31.) to show, “ *Quanto sia pericoloso credere agli sbanditi :*” and who says concerning the means of war, (lib. ii. c. 10.) “ *Son ben necessari i danari in secondo luogo, ma è una necessità che i soldati buoni per se medesimi la vincono ; perchè è impossibile che a’ buoni soldati manchino i danari, come che i danari per loro medesimi trovino i buoni soldati.*”

not have relied upon bringing the war to a successful end by aid of a party among the French: they would not have confided in the reports of emigrants; and they would not have supposed that because the French finances were in confusion, France was therefore incapable of carrying on war with vigour and ability; men and not money being the sinews of war, as Machiavelli had taught, and the revolutionary rulers and Buonaparte after them had learnt. Each of these errors they committed, though all were marked upon the chart!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Such maxims are like beacons on a dangerous shore, not the less necessary, because the seaman may sometimes be deceived by false lights, and sometimes mistaken in his distances; but the possibility of being so misled will be borne in mind by the cautious. Machiavelli is always sagacious, but the tree of knowledge of which he had gathered, grew not in Paradise; it had a bitter root, and the fruit savours thereof, even to deadliness. He believed men to be so malignant* by nature that

* “... è necessario a chi dispone una repubblica, ed ordina leggi in quella, presupporre tutti gli uomini essere cattivi, e che gli abbiano sempre ad usare la malignità dell' animo loro, qualunque volta ne abbiano libera occasione... Gli uomini non operano mai

they always act malevolently from choice, and never well except by compulsion; a devilish doctrine, to be accounted for rather than excused by the circumstances of his age and country. For he lived in a land where intellect was highly cultivated, and morals thoroughly corrupted, the papal Church* having by its doctrines, its practices, and its example, made one part of the Italians heathenish and superstitious, the other impious...and both wicked.

The rule of policy as well as of private morals is to be found in the Gospel; and a religious sense of duty towards God and man is the first thing needful in a statesman: herein he has an unerring guide when † knowledge

nulla bene se non per necessità.—Discorsi, l. 1. c. 3. vol. iii. p. 20.

* “... quelli popoli che sono più propinqui alla Chiesa Romana, capo della Religione nostra, hanno meno Religione.... Per gli esempi rei di quella corte, questa provincia (Italia) ha perduto ogni devozione ed ogni Religione; il che si tira dietro infiniti inconvenienti e infiniti disordini...Abbiamo adunque con la Chiesa e coi Preti, noi Italiani questo primo obbligo, d'essere diventati senza Religione e cattivi.”—Ib. l. 1. c. 12. p. 54.

† “... The rise and fall of kingdoms commonly outreach any one man's age or observation; and such as follow, mark the occurrences of their own times, more than their connection with former: whence it is that secular politicians are always learning, and never attain unto the knowledge of what they seek.”—*Jackson*, ii. 204.

fails him, and experience affords no light. This, with a clear head and a single heart, will carry him through all difficulties; and the just confidence which, having these, he will then have in himself, will obtain for him the confidence of the nation. In every nation indeed which is conscious of its strength, the minister who takes the highest tone, will invariably be the most popular; let him uphold, even haughtily, the character* of his country, and the heart and voice of the people will be with him. But haughtiness implies always something that is hollow: the tone of a wise minister will be firm, but calm. He will neither truckle to his enemies in the vain hope of conciliating them by a specious candour, which they at the same time flatter and despise; nor will he stand aloof from his friends, lest he should be accused of regarding them with partiality; and thus while he secures the attachment of the one he will command the respect of the other. He will not, like the Lacedemonians,† think any measures honourable which accord with his inclinations, and just if they promote his views; but in all

* Lord Chatham, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Canning, are proofs of this.

† “...τὰ μὲν ἡδέα καλὰ νομίζουσι, τὰ δὲ ἐνυμφέροντα δίκαια.”
—Thucydides, E. §. 105.

cases he will do that which is lawful and right, holding this for a certain truth, that in politics, the straight path is the sure one! Such a minister will hope for the best, and expect the best; by acting openly, steadily and bravely, he will act always for the best: and so acting, be the issue what it may, he will never dishonour himself or his country, nor fall under the “sharp* judgement,” of which they that are in “high places” are in danger.

MONTESINOS.

I am pleased to hear you include hopefulness among the needful qualifications.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

It was a Jewish maxim that the spirit of prophecy rests only upon eminent, happy and cheerful men.

MONTESINOS.

A wise woman, by which I do not mean in vulgar parlance, one who pretends to prophecy, has a maxim to the same effect: *toma este aviso*, she says, *guardate de aquel que no tiene esperanza de bien!*† take care of him who hath no hope of good!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

“Of whole heart cometh hope,” says old

* Wisdom, vi. 3.

† Dona Oliva Sabuco. ff. 46.

Piers Ploughman. And these maxims are warranted by philosophy, divine and human :.. by human wisdom, because he who hopes little will attempt little ; fear is “ a betrayal of the succours which reason offereth,” and in difficult times, **pericula magna non nisi periculis depelli solent* ;..by religion, because the ways of Providence are not so changed under the dispensation of Grace, from what they were under the old law, but that he who means well, and acts well, and is not wanting to himself, may rightfully look for a blessing upon the course which he pursues. The upright individual may rest his head in peace upon this hope ; the upright minister who conducts the affairs of a nation may trust † in it ; for as national sins bring after them in sure ‡ consequence their merited punishment, so national virtue, which is na-

* Cardan. de propriâ vitâ. 271.

† Louis XIV. states this among the other considerations which encouraged him under all difficulties ; “ *qu'en toutes les entreprises justes et legitimes, le temps, l'action même, le secours du ciel, ouvrent d'ordinaire mille voies et decouvrent mille facilités qu'on n'attendoit pas.*”—Mem. Historiques, t. i. 13.

‡ “ For God, in his usual course of justice, so suits his punishments to the most accustomed habits and predominant sins, that unto men, religiously observant of times and seasons, the growth and process of the one will give a certain crisis of the other.”—Jackson, i. 497.

tional wisdom, obtains in like manner its temporal and visible reward.

Blessings and curses are before you, and which are to be your portion depends upon the direction of public opinion. The march of intellect is proceeding at quick time; and if its progress be not accompanied by a corresponding improvement in morals and religion, the faster it proceeds, with the more violence will you be hurried down the road to ruin.

One of the first effects of printing was to make proud men look upon learning as disgraced, by being thus brought within reach of the common people. Till that time learning, such as it was, had been confined to courts and convents, the low birth of the clergy being overlooked, because they were privileged by their order. But when laymen in humble life were enabled to procure books, the pride of aristocracy took an absurd course, insomuch that at one time it was deemed derogatory for a nobleman if he could read or write. Even scholars themselves complained that the reputation of learning, and the respect due to it, and its rewards, were lowered when it was thrown open to all men; and it was seriously proposed to prohibit the printing of any book that could be

afforded for sale below the price of three *soldi*.^{*} This base and invidious feeling was perhaps never so directly avowed in other countries as in Italy, the land where literature was first restored; and yet in this more liberal island, ignorance was for some generations considered to be a mark of distinction by which a man of gentle birth† chose, not unfrequently, to make it apparent that he was no more obliged to live by the toil of his brain, than by the sweat of his brow. The same changes in society which rendered it no longer possible for this class of men to pass their lives in idleness, have completely put an end to this barbarous pride. It is as obsolete as the fashion of long finger nails, which in some parts of the east are still the distinctive mark of those who labour not with their hands. All classes are now brought within the reach of your current literature, . . . that literature which, like a moral atmosphere, is, as it were, the medium of intellectual life, and on the quality of which, according as it may be salubrious or noxious, the health of the public

^{*} Lodovico Dominichi, *Dialoghi*, p. 389.

† “Can you write and read then?”

Buz. As most of your gentlemen do—my bond has been taken with my mark at it,

Dekker, Wonder of a Kingdom.

mind depends. There is, if not a general desire for knowledge, a general appearance of such a desire. Authors of all kinds have increased and are increasing among you. Romancers...

MONTESINOS.

—some of whom attempt things which had hitherto been unattempted yet in prose or rhyme, because among all the extravagant intellects with which the world has teemed, none were ever before so utterly extravagant as to chuse for themselves themes of such revolting monstrosity."

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Poets...

MONTESINOS.

*Tanti Roma non ha preti, o dottori
Bologna.*

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Critics...

MONTESINOS.

More numerous yet; for this is a corps in which many who are destined for better things engage, till they are ashamed of the service; and a much greater number who endeavour to distinguish themselves in higher walks of literature, and fail, take shelter in it; as they cannot attain reputation themselves, they endeavour to prevent others from being more successful,

and find in the gratification of envy some recompense for disappointed vanity.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Philosophers...

MONTESINOS.

True and false; the philosophers and the philosophists; some of the former so full, that it would require, as the Rabbies say of a certain pedigree in the Book of Chronicles, four hundred camel-loads of commentaries to expound the difficulties in their text; others so empty, that nothing can approximate so nearly to the notion of an infinitesimal quantity as their meaning.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

With this multiplication of books, which in its proportionate increase marvellously exceeds that of your growing population, are you a wiser, a more intellectual, or more imaginative people than when, as in my days, the man of learning, while he sat at his desk, had his whole library within arms-length?

MONTESINOS.

If we are not wiser, it must be because the means of knowledge, which are now both abundant and accessible, are either neglected or misused.

The sciences are not here to be considered:

in these our progress has been so great, that seeing the moral and religious improvement of the nation has in no degree kept pace with it, you have reasonably questioned whether we have not advanced in certain branches, farther and faster than is conducive to, or perhaps consistent with, the general good. But there can be no question that great advancement has been made in many departments of literature conducive to innocent recreation (which would be alone no trifling good, even were it not, as it is, itself conducive to health both of body and of mind), to sound knowledge, and to moral and political improvement. There are now few portions of the habitable earth which have not been explored, and with a zeal and perseverance which had slept from the first age of maritime discovery till it was revived under George III. In consequence of this revival, and the awakened spirit of curiosity and enterprize, every year adds to our ample store of books relating to the manners of other nations, and the condition of men in states and stages of society different to our own. And of such books we cannot have too many; the idlest reader may find amusement in them of a more satisfactory kind than he can gather from the novel of the day or the criticism of the day; and there are few among

them so entirely worthless, that the most studious man may not derive from them some information for which he ought to be thankful. Some memorable instances we have had in this generation of the absurdities and errors, sometimes affecting seriously the public service and the national character, which have arisen from the want of such knowledge as by means of such books is now generally diffused. Skates and warming pans will not again be sent out as ventures to Brazil. The Board of Admiralty will never again attempt to ruin an enemy's port by sinking a stone-ship, to the great amusement of that enemy, in a tide harbour. Nor will a cabinet minister think it sufficient excuse for himself and his colleagues, to confess that they were no better informed than other people, and had every thing to learn concerning the interior of a country into which they had sent an army.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This is but a prospective benefit, and of a humble kind, if it extend no further than to save you from any future exposure of an ignorance which might deserve to be called disgraceful. We profited more by our knowledge of other countries in the age when

Hops and turkeys, carp and beer,
Came into England all in one year.

MONTESINOS.

And yet in that age you profited slowly by the commodities which the eastern and western parts of the world afforded. Gold, pearls, and spices, were your first imports. For the honour of science and of humanity, medicinal plants were soon sought for. But two centuries elapsed before tea and potatoes, ..the most valuable products of the east and west, ..which have contributed far more to the general good than all their spices and gems and precious metals, ..came into common use; nor have they yet been generally adopted on the continent, while tobacco found its way to Europe an hundred years earlier; and its filthy abuse, though here happily less than in former times, prevails every where.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Pro pudor! There is a snuff-box on the mantlepiece, ..and thou revilest tobacco!

MONTESINOS.

Distinguish, I pray you, gentle Ghost! I condemn the abuse of tobacco as filthy, implying in those words that it has its allowable and proper use. To smoke, is, in certain circumstances, a wholesome practice; it may be regarded with a moral complacency as the poor man's luxury, and with liking by any one who follows a lighted pipe in the open air. But

whatever may be pleaded for its soothing and intellectualizing effects, the odour within doors of a defunct pipe is such an abomination, that I join in anathematizing it with James, the best natured of kings, and Josuah Sylvester, the most voluble of poets.

SIR THOMAS MOORE.

Thou hast written verses in praise of snuff!

MONTESINOS.

And if thy nose, Sir Spirit, were anything more than the ghost of an olfactor, I would offer it a propitiatory pinch, that you might the more feelingly understand the merit of the said verses, and admire them accordingly. But I am no more to be deemed a snuff-taker, because I carry a snuff-box when travelling, and keep one at hand for occasional use, than I am to be reckoned a casuist or a pupil of the Jesuits because the Moral Philosophy of Escobar and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola are on my shelves...Thank Heaven I bear about with me no habits which I cannot lay aside as easily as my clothes.

The age is past in which travellers could add much to the improvement, the comfort, or the embellishment of this country, by imparting anything which they have newly observed in foreign parts. We have happily more to com-

municate now than to receive. Yet when I tell you that since the commencement of the present century, there have been every year, upon an average, more than an hundred and fifty plants which were previously unknown here, introduced into the nurseries and market gardens about London, you will acknowledge that, in this branch at least, a constant desire is shown of enriching ourselves with the produce of other lands.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Philosophers of old, travelled to observe the manners of men and study their institutions. I know not whether they found more pleasure in the study, or derived more advantages from it, than the adventurers reap, who, in these latter times, have crossed the seas and exposed themselves to dangers of every kind, for the purpose of extending the catalogue of plants.

MONTESINOS.

Of all travels, those of the mere botanist are the least instructive..

SIR THOMAS MORE.

..To any but botanists,..but for them alone they are written. Do not depreciate any pursuit which leads men to contemplate the works of their Creator ! The Linnean traveller who,

when you look over the pages of his journal, seems to you a mere botanist, has in his pursuit, as you have in yours, an object that occupies his time, and fills his mind, and satisfies his heart. It is as innocent as yours, and as disinterested, . . . perhaps more so, because it is not so ambitious. Nor is the pleasure which he partakes in investigating the structure of a plant less pure, or less worthy, than what you derive from perusing the noblest productions of human genius. . . . You look at me as if you thought this reprehension were undeserved!

MONTESINOS.

The eye then, Sir Thomas, is proditorious, and I will not gainsay its honest testimony: yet would I rather endeavour to profit by the reprehension, than seek to show that it was uncalled for. If I know myself, I am never prone to undervalue either the advantages or acquirements which I do not possess. That knowledge is said to be of all others the most difficult; whether it be the most useful the Greeks themselves differ, for if one of their wise men left the words γνῶθι σεαυτόν as his maxim to posterity, a poet, who perhaps may have been not less deserving of the title, has controverted it, and told us that for the uses of the world, it is more advantageous for us to

understand the character of others than to know ourselves.*

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Here lies the truth; he who best understands himself is least likely to be deceived in others: you judge of others by yourselves, and therefore measure them by an erroneous standard whenever your autometry is false. This is one reason why the empty critic is usually contumelious and flippant, the competent one as generally equitable and humane.

MONTESINOS.

This justice I would render to the Linnean school, that it produced our first devoted travellers; the race to which they succeeded employed themselves chiefly in visiting museums and cataloguing pictures, and now and then copying inscriptions; even in their books notices are found for which they who follow them may be thankful: and facts are sometimes, as if by accident, preserved, for useful application. They went abroad to accomplish or to amuse themselves,..to improve their time, or to get rid of it: the botanists travelled for the sake

* Κατα πολλ' ἂν ἔστιν οὐ καλῶς εἰρημένον
Το γνῶθι σεαυτόν· χρησιμώτερον γὰρ ἦν
Το γνῶθι τες ἄλλες.

MENANDER.

of their favourite science, and many of them, in the prime of life, fell victims to their ardour, in the unwholesome climates to which they were led. Latterly we have seen this ardour united with the highest genius, the most comprehensive knowledge, and the rarest qualities of perseverance, prudence and enduring patience. This generation will not leave behind it two names more entitled to the admiration of after ages than Burckhardt and Humboldt. The former purchased this pre-eminence at the cost of his life: the latter lives, and long may he live to enjoy it.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This very important branch of literature can scarcely be said to have existed in my time; the press was then too much occupied in preserving such precious remains of antiquity as could be rescued from destruction, and in matters which inflamed the minds of men as indeed they concerned their dearest and most momentous interests. Moreover reviving literature took the natural course of imitation, and the ancients had left nothing in this kind to be imitated. Nothing therefore appeared in it, except the first inestimable relations of the discoveries in the east and west, and these belong rather to the department of history. As travels

we had only the chance notices which occurred in the Latin correspondence of learned men, when their letters found their way to the public.

Montesinos.

Precious remains these are, but all too few... The first travellers whose journals or memoirs have been preserved were ambassadors; then came the adventurers of whom you speak; and it is remarkable that two centuries afterward, we should find men of the same stamp among the Buccaneers, who recorded in like manner with faithful diligence whatever they had opportunity of observing in their wild and nefarious course of life.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

You may deduce from thence two conclusions, apparently contrariant, yet both warranted by the fact which you have noticed. It may be presumed that men who, while engaged in such an occupation, could thus meritoriously employ their leisure, were rather compelled by disastrous circumstances to such a course, than engaged in it by inclination: that it was their misfortune rather than their fault if they were not the benefactors and ornaments of society, instead of being its outlaws; and that under a wise and parental government such persons never would be lost. This is a

charitable consideration, nor will I attempt to impugn it; the other may seem less so, but is of more practical importance. For these examples are proof, if proof were needed, that intellectual attainments and habits are no security for good conduct, unless they are supported by religious principles; without religion the highest endowments of intellect can only render the possessor more dangerous if he be ill disposed, if well disposed only more unhappy.

The conquerors, as they called themselves, were followed by missionaries.

MONTESINOS.

Our knowledge of the remoter parts of the world, during the first part of the seventeenth century, must chiefly be obtained from their recitals. And there is no difficulty in separating what may be believed from their fables, because their falsehoods being systematically devised and circulated in pursuance of what they regarded as part of their professional duty, they told truth when they had no motive for deceiving the reader. Let any person compare the relations of our Protestant missionaries, with those of the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, or any other Romish order, and the difference which he cannot fail to perceive between the plain truth of the one, and the audacious and

elaborate mendacity of the other, may lead him to a just inference concerning the two churches.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Their fables were designed, by exciting admiration, to call forth money for the support of missions, which, notwithstanding such false pretences, were piously undertaken and heroically pursued. They scrupled therefore as little at interlarding their chronicles and annual letters with such miracles, as poets at the use of machinery in their verses. Think not that I am excusing them; but thus it was that they justified their system of imposition to themselves, and this part of it must not be condemned as if it proceeded from an evil intention.

MONTESINOS.

Yet, Sir Thomas, the best of those missionaries are not more to be admired for their exemplary virtue, and pitied for the superstition which debased their faith, than others of their respective orders are to be abominated for the deliberate wickedness with which, in pursuance of the same system, they imposed the most blasphemous and atrocious legends upon the credulous, and persecuted with fire and sword those who opposed their deceitful villainy. One reason wherefore so few travels were written in

the age of which we are speaking, is, that no Englishman, unless he were a Papist, could venture into Italy, or any other country where the Romish religion was established in full power, without danger of being seized by the Inquisition!

Other dangers by sea and by land, from corsairs and banditti, including too the chances of war and of pestilence, were so great in that age, that it was not unusual for men when they set out upon their travels to put out a sum upon their own lives, which if they died upon the journey was to be the underwriter's gain, but to be repaid if they returned, with such increase as might cover their intervening expenses. The chances against them seem to have been considered as nearly three to one. But danger, within a certain degree, is more likely to provoke adventurers than to deter them.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There thou hast uttered a comprehensive truth. No legislator has yet so graduated his scale of punishment as to ascertain that degree which shall neither encourage hope, nor excite the audacity of desperate guilt. It is certain that there are states of mind in which the consciousness that he is about to play for life or death stimulates a gamester to the throw. This

will apply to most of those crimes which are committed for cupidity, and not attended with violence.

MONTESINOS.

Well then may these hazards have acted as incentives where there was the desire of honour, the spirit of generous enterprize, or even the love of notoriety. By the first of these motives Pietro della Valle (the most romantic in his adventures of all true travellers) was led abroad; the latter spring set in motion my comical countryman Tom Coriat, who by the engraver's help has represented himself at one time in full dress, making a leg to a courtesan at Venice, and at another dropping from his rags the all-too-lively proofs of prolific poverty.

Perhaps literature has never been so directly benefited by the spirit of trade as it was in the seventeenth century, when European jewellers found their most liberal customers in the courts of the east. Some of the best travels which we possess, as well as the best materials for Persian and Indian history, have been left us by persons engaged in that trade. From that time travelling became less dangerous, and more frequent in every generation; except during the late years when Englishmen were excluded from the continent by that military Tyrant,

whom (with God's blessing on a rightful cause) we have beaten from his imperial throne. And now it is more customary for females in the middle rank of life to visit Italy, than it was for them in your days to move twenty miles from home.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Is this a salutary or an injurious fashion?

MONTESINOS.

According to the subject, and to the old school maxim *quicquid recipitur, recipitur in modum recipientis*. The wise come back wiser: the well-informed with richer stores of knowledge: the empty and the vain return as they went; and there are some who bring home foreign vanities and vices in addition to their own.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And what has been imported by such travellers for the good of their country?

MONTESINOS.

Coffee in the seventeenth century; inoculation in that which followed: since which we have had now and then a new dance, and a new game at cards; curry and malagatany soup from the East Indies, turtle from the West, and that earthly nectar to which the East contributes its arrack, and the West its limes and

its rum. In the language of men it is called Punch; I know not what may be its name in the Olympian speech. But tell not the Englishmen of George the Second's age, lest they should be troubled for the degeneracy of their grandchildren, that the punch bowl is now become a relic of antiquity, and their beloved beverage almost as obsolete as metheglin, hippocras, clary or morat!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

It is well for thee that thou art not a young beagle instead of a grey-headed bookman, or that rambling vein of thine would often bring thee under the lash of the whipper-in! Off thou art and away in pursuit of the smallest game that rises before thee.

MONTESINOS.

Good Ghost, there was once a wise Lord Chancellor, who in a dialogue upon weighty matters thought it not unbecoming to amuse* himself with discursive merriment concerning St. Appollonia and St. Uncumber.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Good Flesh and Blood, that was a nipping

* The interlocutor in this "Dialogue" says to Sir Thomas, "Ye use, my mayster sayth, to look so sadly whan ye mene merely, yt many tymes men doubte whyther ye speke in sporte whann ye mene good ernest."—*Ib.* 18.

reply! And happy man is his dole who retains in grave years, and even to grey hairs, enough of green youth's redundant spirits for such excursiveness! He who never relaxes into sportiveness is a wearisome companion; but beware of him who jests at every thing! Such men disparage by some ludicrous association all objects which are presented to their thoughts, and thereby render themselves incapable of any emotion which can either elevate or soften them; they bring upon their moral being an influence more withering than the blast of the desert. A countenance if it be wrinkled either with smiles or with frowns is to be shunned: the furrows which the latter leave show that the soil is sour; those of the former are symptomatic of a hollow heart.

None of your travellers have reached Utopia, and brought from thence a fuller account of its institutions?

MONTESINOS.

There was one, methinks, who must have had it in view when he walked over the world to discover the source of moral motion. He was afflicted with a tympany of mind produced by metaphysics, which was at that time a common complaint, though attended in him with unusual symptoms: but his heart was healthy and

strong, and might in former ages have enabled him to acquire a distinguished place among the Saints of the Thebais or the Philosophers of Greece.

But although we have now no travellers employed in seeking undiscoverable countries, and although Eldorado, the city of the Cesares, and the Sabbatical River, are expunged even from the maps of credulity and imagination, Welshmen have gone in search of Madoc's descendants, and scarcely a year passes without adding to the melancholy list of those who have perished in exploring the interior of Africa.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Whenever there shall exist a civilized and christian negro state, Providence will open that country to civilization and Christianity: meantime to risque strength, and enterprize and science against climate, is contending against the course of nature. Have these travellers yet obtained for you the secret of the Psylli?

MONTESINOS.

We have learnt from savages the mode of preparing their deadliest poisons; the more useful knowledge by which they render the human body proof against the most venomous serpents has not been sought with equal diligence; there

are however scattered notices* which may perhaps afford some clue to the discovery. The writings of travellers are not more rich in materials for the poet and the historian than they are in useful notices, deposited there like seeds which lie deep in the earth till some chance brings them within reach of air, and then they germinate. These are fields in which something may always be found by the gleaner; and therefore those general collections in which the works are curtailed would be to be reprobated, even if epitomizers did not seem to possess a

* To the notices which I have elsewhere collected upon this subject, (*Omniana*, vol. ii. § 239. p. 259,) I take this opportunity of adding the following passage from a letter of Anchieta's, first published in 1812. Anchieta is one of those Jesuits of whom the most enormous falsehoods have been related, but who was himself a good man, and to be believed in whatever he asserts upon his own knowledge. He states and vouches for the fact, that a person who has once been bitten by a venomous snake, and escaped death, suffers much less pain if he should be bitten a second time, and incurs no danger. "*Porro id apud Indos sic habet, ut si semel icti a colubro mortem evadant, percussi deinceps non solum in discrimen vitæ non veniant sed multo etiam minus sentiant doloris, quod non semel experti sumus.*"

Epistola quamplurimarum rerum naturalium quæ S. Vincentii (nunc S. Pauli) provinciam incolunt, sistens descriptionem. § 13, *Memorias para a Historia das Naçoens Ultramarinas*. T. 1. Num. 3.

certain instinct of generic doltishness which leads them curiously to omit whatever ought especially to be preserved.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

If ever there come a time, Montesinos, when beneficence shall be as intelligent, and wisdom as active, as the spirit of trade, you will then draw from foreign countries other things beside those which now pay duties at the custom-house, or are cultivated in nurseries for the conservatories of the wealthy. Not that I regard with dissatisfaction these latter importations of luxury, however far they may be brought, or at whatever cost; for of all mere pleasures those of a garden are the most salutary, and approach nearest to a moral enjoyment. But you will then (should that time come) seek and find in the laws, usages and experience of other nations, palliatives for some of those evils and diseases which have hitherto been inseparable from society and human nature, and remedies, perhaps, for others.

MONTESINOS.

Happy the travellers who shall be found instrumental to such good! One advantage belongs to authors of this description; because they contribute to the instruction of the learned,

their reputation suffers no diminution by the course of time: age rather enhances their value. In this respect they resemble historians, to whom, indeed, their labours are in a great degree subsidiary.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

They have an advantage over them, my friend, in this, that rarely can they leave evil works behind them, which either from a mischievous persuasion, or a malignant purpose, may heap condemnation upon their own souls as long as such works* survive them. Even

* “The desire of fame is so universal, and seems to be so instinctive in our nature, and operates so powerfully to do good when it seeks its object through laudable pursuits, that it is not a chimerical possibility that it may be something more to us than a voice which we cannot hear, or than a breath which evaporates as it is uttered. The reputation which we attain during this life may follow our being wherever that may be situated hereafter, with all its momentous consequences; creating benefit and pleasure to us there, whenever it has arisen from what piety and virtue sanction and perpetuate here; but causing to us personal and sentient evil and disgrace in our future abode, if it has sprung from actions, writings, or character, which have been repugnant to moral reason, to human welfare, or to religious truth. It is the soundest inference to believe that all fame will be an unceasing companion to its possessor, for good or for evil, as long as the spirit shall exist anywhere in conscious sensitivity.”—*Turner's Modern History of England*, part 2, p. 735.

In this feeling of my excellent friend I heartily concur.

if they should manifest pernicious opinions, and a wicked will, the venom is, in a great degree, sheathed by the vehicle in which it is administered. And this is something; for let me tell thee, thou consumer of goose quills, that of all the Devil's laboratories, there is none in which more poison is concocted for mankind than in the inkstand!

MONTESINOS.

“My withers are unwrung!”

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Be thankful, therefore, in life, as thou wilt in death.

A principle of compensation may be observed in literary pursuits as in other things. Reputations that never flame continue to glimmer for centuries after those which blaze highest have gone out. And what is of more moment, the humblest occupations are morally the safest. Rhadamanthus never puts on his black cap to pronounce sentence upon a dictionary-maker, or the compiler of a county-history.

MONTESINOS.

I am to understand, then, that in the archangel's balance a little book may sink the scale toward the pit; while all the tomes of Thomas Hearne and good old John Nicholls will be weighed among their good works!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Sport as thou wilt in allusions to allegory and fable ; but bear always in thy most serious mind this truth, that men hold under an awful responsibility the talents with which they are entrusted. Kings have not so serious an account to render as they who exercise an intellectual influence over the minds of men !

MONTESINOS.

If evil works, so long as they continue to produce evil, heap up condemnation upon the authors, it is well for some of the wickedest writers that their works do not survive them.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Such men, my friend, even by the most perishable of their wicked works, lay up sufficient condemnation for themselves. The maxim that *malitia supplet aetatem*, is rightfully admitted in human laws : should there not then, by parity of justice, be cases where, when the secrets of the heart are seen, the intention shall be regarded rather than the act ?

The greatest portion of your literature, at any given time, is ephemeral ; indeed, it has ever been so since the discovery of printing ; and this portion it is which is most influential, consequently that by which most good or mischief is done.

MONTESINOS.

Ephemeral it truly may be called ; it is now looked for by the public as regularly as their food ; and, like food, it affects the recipient surely and permanently, even when its effect is slow, according as it is wholesome or noxious. But how great is the difference between the current literature of this and of any former time!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

From that complacent tone it may be presumed that you see in it proof both of moral and intellectual improvement. Montesinos, I must disturb that comfortable opinion, and call upon you to examine how much of this refinement which passes for improvement is superficial. True it is that controversy is carried on with more decency than it was by Martin Luther and a certain Lord Chancellor, to whom you just now alluded ; but if more courtesy is to be found in polemical writers, who are less sincere than either the one or the other, there is as much acerbity of feeling and as much bitterness of heart. You have a class of miscreants which had no existence in those days, .. the panders of the press, who live by administering to the vilest passions of the people, and encouraging their most dangerous errors, practising

upon their ignorance, and inculcating whatever is most pernicious in principle and most dangerous to society. This is their golden age; for though such men would in any age have taken to some villainy or other, never could they have found a course at once so gainful and so safe. Long impunity has taught them to despise the laws which they defy, and the institutions which they are labouring to subvert; any further responsibility enters not into their creed, if that may be called a creed, in which all the articles are negative. If we turn from politics to what should be humaner literature, and look at the self-constituted censors of whatever has past the press, there also we shall find that they who are the most incompetent assume the most authority, and that the public favour such pretensions; for in quackery of every kind, whether medical, political, critical, or hypocritical, *quo quis impudentior eo doctior habetur*.

MONTESINOS.

The pleasure which men take in acting maliciously is properly called by Barrow a *rascally* delight. But this is no new form of malice. "*Avant nous*," says the sagacious but iron-hearted Montluc, . . . "*avant nous ces envies ont regné, et regneront encore après nous, si Dieu ne*

nous vouloit tous refondre." Its worst effect is that which Ben Jonson* remarked: "the gentle reader," says he, "rests happy to hear the worthiest works misrepresented, the clearest actions obscured, the innocentest life traduced; and in such a license of lying, a field so fruitful of slanders, how can there be matter wanting to his laughter? Hence comes the epidemical infection: for how can they escape the contagion of the writings whom the virulency of the calumnies hath not staved off from reading?"

There is another mischief, arising out of ephemeral literature, which was noticed by the same great author. "Wheresoevert† manners and fashions are corrupted," says he, "language is. It imitates the public riot. The excess of feasts and apparel are the notes of a sick state; and the wantonness of language of a sick mind." This was the observation of a man well versed in the history of the ancients and in their literature. The evil prevailed in his time to a considerable degree; but it was not permanent, because it proceeded rather from the affectation of a few individuals than from any general cause: the great poets were free from it; and our prose writers then, and till the end of that century,

* Gifford's Edit. vol. ix. p. 162.

† Ib. p. 186.

were preserved, by their sound studies and logical habits of mind, from any of those faults into which men fall who write loosely because they think loosely. The pedantry of one class and the colloquial vulgarity of another had their day; the faults of each were strongly contrasted, and better writers kept the mean between them. More lasting effect was produced by translators, who, in later times, have corrupted our idiom as much as, in early ones, they enriched our vocabulary; and to this injury, the Scotch have greatly contributed; for composing in a language which is not their mother tongue, they necessarily acquired an artificial and formal style, which, not so much through the merit of a few as owing to the perseverance of others, who for half a century seated themselves on the bench of criticism, has almost superseded the vernacular English of Addison and Swift. Our journals, indeed, have been the great corrupters of our style, and continue to be so; and not for this reason only. Men who write in newspapers, and magazines, and reviews, write for present effect; in most cases this is as much their natural and proper aim, as it would be in public speaking; but when it is so they consider, like public speakers, not so much what is accurate or just,

either in matter or manner, as what will be acceptable to those whom they address. Writing also under the excitement of emulation and rivalry, they seek, by all the artifices and efforts of an ambitious style, to dazzle their readers; and they are wise in their generation, experience having shown that common minds are taken by glittering faults, both in prose and verse, as larks are with looking-glasses.

In this school it is that most writers are now trained; and after such training anything like an easy and natural movement is as little to be looked for in their compositions as in the step of a dancing-master. To the vices of style which are thus generated, there must be added the inaccuracies inevitably arising from haste, when a certain quantity of matter is to be supplied for a daily or weekly publication which allows of no delay, . . the slovenliness that confidence as well as fatigue and inattention will produce, . . and the barbarisms which are the effect of ignorance, or that smattering of knowledge which serves only to render ignorance presumptuous. These are the causes of corruption in our current style; and when these are considered there would be ground for apprehending that the best writings of the last century might become as obsolete as yours in the

like process of time, if we had not in our Liturgy and our Bible a standard from which it will not be possible wholly to depart.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Will the Liturgy and the Bible keep the language at that standard in the colonies, where little or no use is made of the one, and not much, it may be feared, of the other?

MONTESINOS.

A sort of hybrid speech, a *Lingua Anglica* more debased perhaps than the *Lingua Franca* of the Levant, or the Portugueze of Malabar, is likely enough to grow up among the South Sea Islands; like the mixture of Spanish with some of the native languages in South America, or the mingle-mangle which the negroes have made with French and English, and probably with other European tongues in the colonies of their respective states. The spirit of mercantile adventure may produce in this part of the new world a process analogous to what took place throughout Europe on the breaking up of the Western Empire; and in the next millenium these derivatives may become so many cultivated tongues, having each its literature. These will be like varieties in a flower-garden, which the florist raises from seed; but in the colonies, as in our orchards, the graft takes with

it and will preserve the true characteristics of the stock.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

But the same causes of deterioration will be at work there also.

MONTESINOS.

Not nearly in the same degree, nor to an equal extent. Now and then a word with the American impress comes over to us which has not been struck in the mint of analogy. But the Americans are more likely to be infected by the corruption of our written language than we are to have it debased by any importations of this kind from them.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

There is a more important consideration belonging to this subject. The cause which you have noticed as the principal one of this corruption must have a farther and more mischievous effect. For it is not in the vices of an ambitious style that these ephemeral writers, who live upon the breath of popular applause, will rest. Great and lasting reputations, both in ancient and modern times, have been raised notwithstanding that defect, when the ambition from which it proceeded was of a worthy kind, and was sustained by great powers and adequate acquirements. But this ambition, which looks

beyond the morrow, has no place in the writers of a day. Present effect is their end and aim : and too many of them, especially the ablest, who have wanted only moral worth to make them capable of better things, are persons who can “desire* no other mercy from after ages than silence and oblivion.” Even with the better part of the public that author will always obtain the most favourable reception, who keeps most upon a level with them in intellectuals, and puts them to the least trouble of thinking. He who addresses himself with the whole endeavours of a powerful mind to the understanding faculty, may find fit readers ; but they will be few. He who labours for posterity in the fields of research, must look to posterity for his reward. Nay, even they whose business is with the feelings and the fancy, catch most fish when they angle in shallow waters. Is it not so, Piscator ?

MONTESINOS.

In such honest anglers, Sir Thomas, I should look for as many virtues, as good old happy Izaak Walton found in his brethren of the rod and line. Nor will you, I think, disparage them ; for you were of the Rhymers’ Company, and at a time when things appear to us in their true colours and proportion. (if ever while we are

* Bishop Kennet.

yet in the body,) you remembered your verses* with more satisfaction than your controversial writings, even though you had no misgivings concerning the part which you had chosen.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

My verses, friend, had none of the *athanasia* in their composition. Though they have not yet perished, they cannot be said to have a living existence; even you, I suspect, have sought for them rather because of our personal acquaintance than for any other motive. Had I been only a poet, those poems, such as they were, would have preserved my name; but being remembered for other grounds, better

* Sir Thomas More made these verses for his pastime while he was prisoner in the Tower of London:—

DAVY THE DYCEER.

Long was I, Lady Lucke, your serving man,
 And now have lost agayne all that I gat;
 Wherefore whan I thinke on you nowe and than,
 And in my mynde remember this and that,
 Ye may not blame me though I beshrew your cat:
 But in fayth I blesse you agayne a thousand times,
 For lending me now some leysure to mak rhymes.

“Tindal telleth me,” says Sir Thomas, in his answer to that Reformer, “I have been so longe used in my fygures of poetry, that when I erre most, I do now as he supposeth, by reason of a long custume, byleve myself. As for my poetry, veraly I can lytell ellys, and yet not that neyther.” pp. 126.

and worse, the name which I have left has been one cause why they have past into oblivion, sooner than their perishable nature would have carried them thither. If in the latter part of my mortal existence I had misgivings concerning any of my writings, they were of the single one, which is still a living work, and which will continue so to be. I feared that speculative opinions, which had been intended for the possible but remote benefit of mankind, might, by unhappy circumstances, be rendered instrumental to great and immediate evil; . . an apprehension however which was altogether free from self-reproach.

But my verses will continue to exist in their mummy state, long after the worms shall have consumed many of those poetical reputations which are at this time in the cherry-cheek'd bloom of health and youth. Old poets will always retain their value for antiquaries and philologists; modern ones are far too numerous ever to acquire an accidental usefulness of this kind, even if the language were to undergo greater changes than any circumstances are likely to produce. There will now be more

* Poets increase and multiply to that stupendous degree," says Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, (writing in 1723), "you see them at every turn, even in embroidered coats, and pink-

poets* in every generation than in that which preceded it; they will increase faster than your population; and as their number increases, so must the proportion of those who will be remembered, necessarily diminish. Tell the Fitz-Muses this! It is a consideration, Sir Poet, which may serve as a refrigerant for their ardour. Those of the tribe who may flourish hereafter (as the flourishing phrase is) in any particular age, will be little more remembered in the next than the Lord Mayors and Sheriffs who were their contemporaries.

MONTESINOS.

Father in verse, if you had not put off flesh and blood so long, you would not imagine that this consideration will diminish their number. I am sure it would not have affected me forty years ago, had I seen this truth then as clearly as I perceive and feel it now. Though it were manifest to all men that not one poet in an age, in a century, . . . a millennium, could establish his claim to be for ever known, every aspirant would persuade himself that he is the happy

coloured top knots, making verses is become almost as common as taking snuff, and God can tell what miserable stuff people carry about in their pockets and offer to all their acquaintances, and you know one cannot refuse reading and taking a pinch."—Vol. iii. p. 135.

person for whom the inheritance of fame is reserved. And when the dream of immortality is dispersed, motives enough remain for reasonable ambition.

It is related of some good man, (I forget who) that upon his death-bed he recommended his son to employ himself in cultivating a garden, and in composing verses, . . . thinking these to be at once the happiest and the most harmless of all pursuits. Poetry may be, and too often has been wickedly perverted to evil purposes, . . . what indeed is there that may not, when religion itself is not safe from such abuses ! but the good which it does inestimably exceeds the evil. It is no trifling good to provide means of innocent and intellectual enjoyment for so many thousands, in a state like ours ; an enjoyment, heightened, as in every instance it is within some little circle, by personal considerations, raising it to a degree which may deserve to be called happiness. It is no trifling good to win the ear of children with verses which foster in them the seeds of humanity and tenderness and piety, awaken their fancy, and exercise pleasantly and wholesomely their imaginative and meditative powers. It is no trifling benefit to provide a ready mirror for the young, in which they may see their own best feelings reflected,

and wherein “whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,” are presented to them in the most attractive form. It is no trifling benefit to send abroad strains which may assist in preparing the heart for its trials, and in supporting it under them. But there is a greater good than this, . . . a farther benefit. . . Although it is in verse that the most consummate skill in composition is to be looked for, and all the artifice of language displayed, yet it is in verse only that we throw off the yoke of the world, and are as it were privileged to utter our deepest and holiest feelings. Poetry in this respect may be called the salt of the earth; we express in it, and receive in it sentiments for which, were it not for this permitted medium, the usages of the world would neither allow utterance nor acceptance. And who can tell in our heart-chilling and heart-hardening society, how much more selfish, how much more debased, how much worse we should have been, in all moral and intellectual respects, had it not been for the unnoticed and unsuspected influence of this preservative? Even much of that poetry, which is in its composition worthless, or absolutely bad, contributes to this good.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Such poetry then, according to your view, is to be regarded with indulgence.

MONTESINOS.

Thank Heaven, Sir Thomas, I am no farther critical than every author must necessarily be who makes a careful study of his own art. To understand the principles of criticism is one thing ; to be what is called critical, is another ; the first is like being versed in jurisprudence, the other like being litigious. Even those poets who contribute to the mere amusement of their readers, while that amusement is harmless, are to be regarded with complacency if not respect. They are the butterflies of literature, who, during the short season of their summer, enliven the garden and the field. It were pity to touch them even with a tender hand, lest we should brush the down from their wings.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

These are they of whom I spake as angling in shallow waters. You will not regard with the same complacency those who trouble the stream ; still less those who poison it.

MONTESINOS.

*Vesanum tetigisse timent, fugiuntque poetam
Qui sapiunt ; agitant pueri, incautique sequuntur.*

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This brings us again to the point at which you bolted. The desire of producing present effect, the craving for immediate reputation, have led to another vice, analogous to and connected with that of the vicious style, which the same causes are producing, but of worse consequences. The corruption extends from the manner to the matter; and they who brew for the press, like some of those who brew for the publicans, care not, if the potion has but its desired strength, how deleterious may be the ingredients which they use. Horrors at which the innocent heart quails, and the healthy stomach heaves in loathing, are among the least hurtful of their stimulants.

MONTESINOS.

This too, Sir Thomas, is no new evil. An appetite for horrors is one of the diseased cravings of the human mind; and in old times the tragedies which most abounded in them, were for that reason the most popular. The dramatists of our best age, great Ben and greater Shakspeare excepted, were guilty of a farther sin, with which the writers whom you censure are also to be reproached; they excited their auditors by the representation of monstrous crimes, . . . crimes out of the course of

nature. Such fables might lawfully be brought upon the Grecian stage, because the belief of the people divested them of their odious and dangerous character; there they were well known stories, regarded with a religious persuasion of their truth; and the personages, being represented as under the over-ruling influence of dreadful Destiny, were regarded therefore with solemn commiseration, not as voluntary and guilty agents. There is nothing of this to palliate or excuse the production of such stories in later times; the choice, and, in a still greater degree, the invention of any such, implies in the author not merely a want of judgment, but a defect in moral feeling. Here, however, the dramatists of that age stopt. They desired to excite in their audience the pleasure of horror, and this was an abuse of the poet's art: but they never aimed at disturbing their moral perceptions, at presenting wickedness in an attractive form, exciting sympathy with guilt, and admiration for villainy, thereby confounding the distinctions between right and wrong. This has been done in our days; and it has accorded so well with the tendency of other things, that the moral drift of a book is no longer regarded, and the severest censure which can be past upon it is to say that it is in

bad taste; such is the phrase, . . and the phrase is not confined to books alone. Any thing may be written, said, or done, in bad feeling and with a wicked intent; and the public are so tolerant of these, that he who should express a displeasure on that score would be censured for bad taste himself!

SIR THOMAS MORE.

And yet you talked of the improvement of the age, and of the current literature as exceeding in worth that of any former time!

MONTESINOS.

The portion of it which shall reach to future times will justify me; for we have living minds who have done their duty to their own age and to posterity.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Has the age in return done its duty to them?

MONTESINOS.

They complain not of the age, but they complain of an anomalous injustice in the laws. They complain that authors are deprived of a perpetual property in the produce of their own labours, when all other persons enjoy it as an indefeasible and acknowledged right. And they ask upon what principle, with what equity, or under what pretence of public good they are subjected to this injurious enactment? Is it

because their labour is so light, the endowments which are required for it so common, the attainments so cheaply and easily acquired, and the present remuneration in all cases so adequate, so ample and so certain ?

The act whereby authors are deprived of that property in their own works which, upon every principle of reason, natural justice, and common law, they ought to enjoy, is so curiously injurious in its operation, that it bears with most hardship upon the best works. For books of great immediate popularity have their run, and come to a dead stop : the hardship is upon those which win their way slowly and difficultly, but keep the field at last. And it will not appear surprising that this should generally have been the case with books of the highest merit, if we consider what obstacles to the success of a work may be opposed by the circumstances and obscurity of the author, when he presents himself as a candidate for fame, by the humour, or the fashion of the times; the taste of the public, ... more likely to be erroneous than right at any time; and the incompetence, or personal malevolence of some unprincipled critic, who may take upon himself to guide the public opinion, and who if he feels in his own heart that the fame of the man

whom he hates is invulnerable, lays in wait for that reason the more vigilantly to wound him in his fortunes. In such cases, when the copyright as by the existing law departs from the author's family at his death, or at the end of twenty-eight years from the first publication of every work, (if he dies before the expiration of that term,) his representatives are deprived of their property just as it would begin to prove a valuable inheritance.

The last descendants of Milton died in poverty. The descendants of Shakspeare are living in poverty, and in the lowest condition of life. Is this just to these individuals? Is it grateful to the memory of those who are the pride and boast of their country? Is it honourable, or becoming, to us as a nation, holding,..the better part of us assuredly, and the majority affecting to hold,..the names of Shakspeare and Milton in veneration? To have placed the descendants of Shakspeare and Milton in respectability and comfort,..in that sphere of life where, with a full provision for our natural wants and social enjoyments, free scope is given to the growth of our intellectual and immortal part, simple justice was all that was required;..only that they should have possessed the perpetual copyright of their ancestors'

works, . . . only that they should not have been deprived of their proper inheritance.

The decision which time pronounces upon the reputation of authors, and upon the permanent rank which they are to hold in the estimation of posterity, is unerring and final. Restore to them that perpetuity in the property of their works, of which the law has deprived them, and the reward of literary labour will ultimately be in just proportion to its deserts.

However slight may be the hope of obtaining any speedy redress, there is some satisfaction in earnestly protesting against this injustice. And believing as I do, that if society continues to improve, no injustice will long be permitted to continue after it has been fairly exposed, and is clearly apprehended, I cannot but believe that a time must come when the rights of literature will be acknowledged, and its wrongs redressed; and that those authors hereafter who shall deserve well of posterity, will have no cause to reproach themselves for having sacrificed the interests of their children when they disregarded the pursuit of fortune for themselves.

COLLOQUY XV.

THE CONCLUSION.



MONTESINOS.

HERE Sir Thomas is the opinion which I have attempted to maintain concerning the progress and tendency of society, placed in a proper position, and inexpugnably entrenched there according to the rules of art, by the ablest of all moral engineers.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Who may this political Achilles be whom you have called in to your assistance?

MONTESINOS.

Whom Fortune rather has sent to my aid, for my reading has never been in such authors. I have endeavoured always to drink from the spring head, but never ventured out to fish in the deep waters. Thor, himself, when he had hooked the Great Serpent, was unable to draw him up from the abyss.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The waters in which you have now been ang-

ling have been shallow enough, if the pamphlet in your hand is, as it appears to be, a magazine.

MONTESINOS.

“ *Ego sum is,*” said Scaliger,* “ *qui ab omnibus discere volo; neque tam malum librum esse puto, ex quo non aliquem fructum colligere possum.*” I think myself repaid, in a monkish legend, for examining a mass of inane fiction, if I discover a single passage which elucidates the real history or manners of its age. In old poets of the third and fourth order we are contented with a little ore, and a great deal of dross. And so in publications of this kind, prejudicial as they are to public taste and public feeling, and therefore deeply injurious to the real interests of literature, something may sometimes be found to compensate for the trash and tinsel and insolent flippancy, which are now become the staple commodities of such journals. This number contains Kant’s idea of a Universal History on a Cosmo-Political plan; and that Kant is as profound a philosopher as his disciples have proclaimed him to be, this little treatise would fully convince me, if I had not already believed it, in reliance upon one of the very few men

* Epist. 59. p. 172.

who are capable of forming a judgement upon such a writer.

The sum of his argument is this: that as deaths, births, and marriages, and the oscillations of the weather, irregular as they seem to be in themselves, are, nevertheless, reduceable upon the great scale to certain rules; so there may be discovered in the course of human history, a steady and continuous, though slow developement of certain great predispositions in human nature: and that although men neither act under the law of instinct like brute animals, nor under the law of a preconcerted plan like rational cosmopolites, the great current of human actions flows in a regular stream of tendency toward this developement: individuals and nations, while pursuing their own peculiar and often contradictory purposes, following the guidance of a great natural purpose, and thus promoting a process, which even if they perceived it, they would little regard. What that process is he states in the following series of propositions:—

1st. All tendencies of any creature, to which it is predisposed by nature, are destined in the end to develop themselves perfectly, and agreeably to their final purpose.

2d. In man, as the sole rational creature

upon earth, those tendencies which have the use of his reason for their object are destined to obtain their perfect developement in the species only, and not in the individual.

3d. It is the will of nature that man should owe to himself alone every thing which transcends the mere mechanic constitution of his animal existence, and that he should be susceptible of no other happiness or perfection than what he has created for himself, instinct apart, through his own reason.

4th. The means which nature employs to bring about the developement of all the tendencies she has laid in man, is the antagonism of those tendencies in the social state, .. no farther, however, than to that point at which this antagonism becomes the cause of social arrangements founded in law.

5th. The highest problem for the human species, to the solution of which it is irresistibly urged by natural impulses, is the establishment of a universal civil society, founded on the empire of political justice.

6th. This problem is, at the same time, the most difficult of all, and the one which is latest solved by man.

7th. The problem of the establishment of a perfect constitution of society depends upon the

problem of a system of international relations, adjusted to law, and apart from this latter problem cannot be solved.

8th. The history of the human race, as a whole, may be regarded as the unravelling of a hidden plan of nature for accomplishing a perfect state of civil constitution for society in its internal relations, (and as the condition of that, by the last proposition, in its external relations also,) as the sole state of society in which the tendencies of human nature can be all and fully developed.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

This is indeed a master of the sentences, upon whose text it may be profitable to dwell. Let us look to his propositions. From the first this conclusion must follow; that as nature has given man all his faculties for use, any system of society in which the moral and intellectual powers of any portion of the people are left undeveloped for want of cultivation, or receive a perverse direction, is plainly opposed to the system of Nature, in other words, to the will of God. Is there any Government upon earth that will bear this test?

MONTESINOS.

I should rather ask of you, . . will there ever be one?

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Not till there be a system of Government, conducted in strict conformity to the precepts of the Gospel.

MONTESINOS.

Offer these truths to Power, will she obey?

It prunes her pomp, perchance ploughs up the root.

LORD BROOKE.

Yet, in conformity to those principles alone, it is that subjects can find their perfect welfare, and states their full security. Christianity may be long in obtaining the victory over the powers of this world, but when that consummation shall have taken place the converse of his second proposition will hold good; for the species having obtained its perfect developement, the condition of society must then be such that individuals will obtain it also as a necessary consequence.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Here you and your Philosopher part company. For he asserts that man is left to deduce from his own unassisted reason every thing which relates not to his mere material nature.

MONTESINOS.

There, indeed, I must diverge from him; and what in his language is called the hidden plan

of Nature, in mine will be the revealed will of God.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

The will is revealed ; but the plan is hidden. Let man dutifully obey that will, and the perfection of society and of human nature will be the result of such obedience ; but upon obedience they depend. Blessings and curses are set before you, .. for nations as for individuals, .. yea, for the human race.

Flatter not yourself with delusive expectations ! The end may be according to your hope ; .. whether it will be so, (which God grant !) is as inscrutable for Angels as for men. But to descry that great struggles are yet to come is within reach of human foresight, .. that great tribulations must needs accompany them, .. and that these may be . . . you know not how near at hand !

Throughout what is called the Christian world there will be a contest between Impiety and Religion ; the former every where is gathering strength, and wherever it breaks loose the foundations of human society will be shaken. Do not suppose that you are safe from this danger because you are blest with a pure creed, a reformed ritual, and a tolerant Church ! Even here the standard of Impiety has been set up ;

and the drummers who beat the march of intellect through your streets, lanes, and market-places, are enlisted under it.

The struggle between Popery and Protestantism is renewed. And let no man deceive himself by a vain reliance upon the increased knowledge, or improved humanity of the times ! Wickedness is ever the same ; and you never were in so much danger from moral weakness.

Co-existent with these struggles is that between the feudal system of society as variously modified throughout Europe, and the levelling principle of democracy. That principle is actively and indefatigably at work in these kingdoms, allying itself as occasion may serve with Popery or with Dissent, with Atheism or with Fanaticism, with Profligacy or with Hypocrisy, ready confederates, each having its own sinister views, but all acting to one straight forward end. Your rulers meantime seem to be trying that experiment with the British Constitution which Mithridates is said to have tried upon his own ; they suffer poison to be administered in daily doses, as if they expected that by such a course the public mind would at length be rendered poison-proof !

The first of these struggles will affect all Christendom ; the third may once again shake

the monarchies of Europe. The second will be felt widely; but nowhere with more violence than in Ireland, that unhappy country, wherein your Government, after the most impolitic measures into which weakness was ever deluded, or pusillanimity intimidated, seems to have abdicated its functions, contenting itself with the semblance of an authority which it has wanted either wisdom or courage to exert.

There is a fourth danger, the growth of your manufacturing system; and this is peculiarly your own. You have a great and increasing population, exposed at all times by the fluctuations of trade to suffer the severest privations in the midst of a rich and luxurious society, under little or no restraint from religious principle, and if not absolutely disaffected to the institutions of the country, certainly not attached to them: a class of men aware of their numbers and of their strength; experienced in all the details of combination; improvident when they are in the receipt of good wages, yet feeling themselves injured when those wages, during some failure of demand, are so lowered as no longer to afford the means of comfortable subsistence; and directing against the Government and the laws of the country their resentment and indignation for the evils which have been brought

upon them by competition and the spirit of rivalry in trade. They have among them intelligent heads and daring minds; and you have already seen how perilously they may be wrought upon by seditious journalists and seditious orators, in a time of distress.

On what do you rely for security against these dangers? On public opinion? You might as well calculate upon the constancy of wind and weather in this uncertain climate. On the progress of knowledge? it is such knowledge as serves only to facilitate the course of delusion. On the laws? the law which should be like a sword in a strong hand, is weak as a bulrush if it be feebly administered in time of danger. On the people? they are divided. On the Parliament? every faction will be fully and formidably represented there. On the Government? it suffers itself to be insulted and defied at home, and abroad it has shown itself incapable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with its allies, so far has it been divested of power by the usurpation of the press. It is at peace with Spain, and it is at peace with Turkey; and although no government was ever more desirous of acting with good faith, its subjects are openly assisting the Greeks with men and money against the one, and the

Spanish Americans against the other. Athens, in the most turbulent times of its democracy, was not more effectually domineered over by its demagogues than you are by the press, . . a press which is not only without restraint, but without responsibility; and in the management of which those men will always have most power who have least probity, and have most completely divested themselves of all sense of honour, and all regard for truth.

The root of all your evils is in the sinfulness of the nation. The principle of duty is weakened among you; that of moral obligation is loosened; that of religious obedience is destroyed. Look at the worldliness of all classes, . . the greediness of the rich, . . the misery of the poor, . . and the appalling depravity which is* spreading among the lower classes through town and country; . . a depravity which proceeds unchecked because of the total want of discipline, and for which there is no other cor-

* The Report of the Committee for inquiring into the cause of the increase of Commitments and Convictions in London and Middlesex, states, that notwithstanding all we hear of schools and the progress of education, juvenile depravity was never so unlimited in degree, or so desperate in character.

rective than what may be supplied by fanaticism, which is itself an evil.

If there be nothing exaggerated in this representation, you must acknowledge that though the human race, considered upon the great scale, should be proceeding toward the perfectibility for which it may be designed, the present aspects in these kingdoms are nevertheless rather for evil than for good . . . Sum you up now upon the hopeful side.

MONTESINOS.

First, then, I rest in a humble but firm reliance upon that Providence which sometimes in its mercy educes from the errors of men a happier issue than could ever have been attained by their wisdom ;—that Providence which has delivered this nation from so many and such imminent dangers heretofore.

Looking, then, to human causes, there is hope to be derived from the humanizing effects of literature, which has now first begun to act upon all ranks. Good principles are indeed used as the stalking horse under cover of which pernicious designs may be advanced ; but the better seeds are thus disseminated and fructify after the ill design has failed.

The cruelties of the old criminal law have

been abrogated. Debtors are no longer indiscriminately punished by indefinite imprisonment. The iniquity of the slave trade has been acknowledged, and put an end to, so far as the power of this country extends; and although slavery is still tolerated, and must be so for awhile, measures have been taken for alleviating it while it continues, and preparing the way for its gradual and safe removal. These are good works of the Government. And when I look upon the conduct of that Government in all its foreign relations, though there may be some things to disapprove, and some sins of omission to regret, it has been, on the whole, so disinterested, so magnanimous, so just, that this reflection gives me a reasonable, and a religious ground of hope. And the reliance is strengthened when I call to mind that missionaries from Great Britain are at this hour employed in spreading the glad tidings of the Gospel far and wide among heathen nations.

Descending from these wider views to the details of society, there too I perceive ground, if not for confidence, at least for hope. There is a general desire throughout the higher ranks for bettering the condition of the poor, a subject to which the Government also has directed its patient attention: minute inquiries have

been made into their existing state, and the increase of pauperism and of crimes. In no other country have the wounds of the commonwealth been so carefully probed. By means of colonization, of an improved parochial order, and of a more efficient police, the further increase of these evils may be prevented; while, by education, by providing means of religious instruction for all, by Saving-Banks, and perhaps by the establishment of Owenite communities among themselves, the labouring classes will have their comforts enlarged, and their well-being secured, if they are not wanting to themselves in prudence and good conduct. A beginning has been made, . . an impulse given : it may be hoped . . . almost, I will say, it may be expected . . . that in a few generations this whole class will be placed within the reach of moral and intellectual gratifications, whereby they may be rendered healthier, happier, better in all respects, an improvement which will be not more beneficial to them as individuals, than to the whole body of the commonweal.

The diffusion of literature, though it has rendered the acquirement of general knowledge impossible, and tends inevitably to diminish the number of sound scholars, while it increases the multitude of sciolists, carries with it a be-

neficial influence to the lower classes. Our booksellers already perceive that it is their interest to provide cheap publications for a wide public, instead of looking to the rich alone as their customers. There is reason to expect that, in proportion as this is done, .. in proportion as the common people are supplied with wholesome entertainment, (and wholesome it is, if it be only harmless) they will be less liable to be acted upon by fanaticism and sedition.

You have not exaggerated the influence of the newspaper press, nor the profligacy of some of those persons by whom this unrestrained and irresponsible power is exercised. Nevertheless it has done and is doing great and essential good. The greatest evils in society proceed from the abuse of power; and this, though abundantly manifested in the newspapers themselves, they prevent in other quarters. No man engaged in public life could venture now upon such transactions as no one, in their station, half a century ago, would have been ashamed of. There is an end of that scandalous jobbing which at that time existed in every department of the state, and in every branch of the public service; and a check is imposed upon any scandalous and unfit promotion, civil or ecclesiastical. By whatever persons the

government may be administered, they are now well aware that they must do nothing which will not bear daylight and strict investigation. The magistrates also are closely observed by this self-constituted censorship; and the inferior officers cannot escape exposure for any perversion of justice, or undue exercise of authority. Public nuisances are abated by the same means, and public grievances which the legislature might else overlook, are forced upon its attention. Thus, in ordinary times, the utility of this branch of the press is so great, that one of the worst evils to be apprehended from the abuse of its power at all times, and the wicked purposes to which it is directed in dangerous ones, is the ultimate loss of a liberty, which is essential to the public good, but which when it passes into licentiousness, and effects the overthrow of a state, perishes in the ruin it has brought on.

In the fine arts, as well as in literature, a levelling principle is going on, fatal perhaps to excellence, but favourable to mediocrity. Such facilities are afforded to imitative talent, that whatever is imitable will be imitated. Genius will often be suppressed by this, and when it exerts itself, will find it far more difficult to obtain notice than in former times. There is

the evil here that ingenious persons are seduced into a profession which is already crowded with unfortunate adventurers; but, on the other hand, there is a great increase of individual and domestic enjoyment. Accomplishments which were almost exclusively professional in the last age, are now to be found in every family within a certain rank of life. Wherever there is a disposition for the art of design, it is cultivated, and in consequence of the general proficiency in this most useful of the fine arts, travellers represent to our view the manners and scenery of the countries which they visit, as well by the pencil as the pen. By means of two fortunate discoveries in the art of engraving, these graphic representations are brought within the reach of whole classes who were formerly precluded by the expense of such things from these sources of gratification and instruction. Artists and engravers of great name are now, like authors and booksellers, induced to employ themselves for this lower and wider sphere of purchasers. In all this I see the cause as well as the effect of a progressive refinement, which must be beneficial in many ways. This very diffusion of cheap books and cheap prints may, in its natural consequences, operate rather to diminish than to increase the

number of adventurers in literature and in the arts. For though at first it will create employment for greater numbers, yet in another generation imitative talent will become so common, that neither parents nor possessors will mistake it for an indication of extraordinary genius, and many will thus be saved from a ruinous delusion. More pictures will be painted but fewer exhibited, . . more poetry written, but less published : and in both arts, talents which might else have been carried to an overstocked and unprofitable market, will be cultivated for their own sakes, and for the gratification of private circles, becoming thus a source of sure enjoyment, and indirectly of moral good. Scientific pursuits will, in like manner, be extended, and pursuits which partake of science, and afford pleasures within the reach of humble life.

Here, then, is good in progress which will hold on its course, and the growth of which will only be suspended, not destroyed, during any of those political convulsions which may too probably be apprehended ; . . too probably, I say, because when you call upon me to consider the sinfulness of this nation, my heart fails. There can be no health, no soundness in the state, till Government shall regard the moral

improvement of the people as its first great duty. The same remedy is required for the rich and for the poor. Religion ought to be so blended with the whole course of instruction, that its doctrines and precepts should indeed “drop as the rain, and distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass;” . . the young plants would then imbibe it, and the heart and intellect assimilate it with their growth. We are, in a great degree, what our institutions make us. Gracious God! were those institutions adapted to Thy will and word, . . were we but broken in from childhood to Thy easy yoke, . . were we but carefully instructed to believe and obey, . . in that obedience and belief we should surely find our temporal welfare and our eternal happiness!

Here, indeed, I tremble at the prospect! Could I look beyond the clouds and the darkness which close upon it, I should then think that there may come a time when that scheme for a perpetual peace among the states of Christendom which Henri IV. formed, and which has been so ably digested by the Abbé St. Pierre, will no longer be regarded as the speculation of a visionary. The Holy Alliance, imperfect and unstable as it is, is in itself a

recognition of the principle. At this day it would be practicable, if one part of Europe were as well prepared for it as the other; but this cannot be, till good shall have triumphed over evil in the struggles which are brooding, or shall have obtained such a predominance as to allay the conflict of opinions before it breaks into open war.

God in his mercy grant that it be so! If I looked to secondary causes alone, my fears would preponderate. But I conclude as I began, in firm reliance upon Him who is the beginning and the end. Our sins are manifold; our danger is great; but His mercy is infinite.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

Rest there in full faith. I leave you to your dreams; draw from them what comfort you can. And now, my friend, farewell!

The look which he fixed on me, as he disappeared, was compassionate and thoughtful; it impressed me with a sad feeling, as if I were not to see him again till we should meet in the world of spirits.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Protestant Sisters of Charity.—p. 319.

“ MY friend C—— is a country clergyman. In his youth he was an officer in the army, and served during several campaigns in the late war in the Peninsula. Having a pleasing figure and countenance, very animated manners, an amiable disposition, and buoyant spirits, he was a great favourite both with men and women in the numerous circle of his acquaintance, and indulged in all that gaiety and dissipation for which the warm southern nations of the continent offer such tempting and boundless opportunities. At the conclusion of the war, he quitted the army, looked round for a profession, and, unsuitable as it may appear, fixed on the church; and having passed the requisite time at —— College, Cambridge, in honest and earnest study, he took orders, married, and obtained a curacy. He is now living in the retired and beautiful village of ——, in the county of ——. The contemplations and active duties of religion have generated in him a mood of mind adapted to his holy office. He is naturally eloquent; he has a ready command of language—a warm and tender heart, which often trembles in his voice during the more touching and empasioned parts of his sermons. His congregation, of course, think him the most eloquent of preachers. But this is not all: to the distressed he is active in giving and procuring relief—to the sick, or those in sorrow, in offering support and consolation—in short, he is an excellent parish

priest. In talking about the contrast between his past and present modes of life, he often declares that he was never happy till now, and that although his income is so narrow as to require the utmost frugality to render it equal to his expenses, he would not exchange the tranquil happiness which he derives from the duties, the contemplations, and the prospects of religion, for all the splendid gaiety, the intoxicating excitement, and the lavish expenses of his youth. He sometimes comes to town to visit me. On one of these occasions he was complaining of the difficulty of procuring medical attendance for the sick poor of his parish, many of whom lived far from the town where the parish surgeon resides. The surgeon himself was too busy in visiting his rich patients—his assistant was ignorant and inattentive—and my friend was convinced that his poor sick flock often suffered a length of illness, and sometimes death, which earlier and better care might have prevented. This gave him great pain, and he was wishing that it was possible to procure a few women of a superior order to the generality of nurses, and taught by a residence in the hospitals to recognize and relieve the most common kinds of illness. ‘They should be,’ he added, ‘animated with religion. Science and mere humanity cannot be relied on. An order of women such as these, distributed among the country parishes in the kingdom, would be of incalculable value. It was formerly the boast of the Catholics that the Protestants had no missionaries. That boast is silenced, but they may still affirm that Protestantism has not yet produced her Sisters of Charity.’

“ When I was in Flanders a short time ago, I saw at Bruges and Ghent some of this singular and useful order of Nuns—they are all of a respectable station in society, and I was told that it is not uncommon for the females of the most wealthy, and even noble families, voluntarily to quit the world and its pleasures, and enter this order, and dedicate themselves to

the most menial attendance on the sick. I went one morning to the hospital at Bruges; all the nurses are 'Beguines,' and it was a striking sight to see these women, whose countenances, manners, and a something in the quality, or cleanness of their stiff white hoods, and black russet gowns, expressive of a station superior to their office, one with a pail in her hand, another down on her knees washing the floor of the chapel. The physician to the hospital spoke in the highest terms of the humility and tenderness with which they nursed his patients. When I fell ill myself, which I did during my stay in this town, I was near having a Sister of Charity for my nurse.

"My friend is right. The attendants on the sick, whether professional or menial, are commonly actuated by scientific zeal, by mere natural humanity, or by mercenary motives; but these cannot be trusted to for steady attention—the one subsides with the solution of a question, the other hardens by habit, the last requires jealous inspection—there are long intervals of indifference, and apathy, and inattention—we want an actuating motive of a more steady and enduring nature, which requires neither curiosity, nor emotion, nor avarice to keep it alive, which still burns in the most tranquil states of mind, and out of the reach of human inspection, and this motive is religion.

"I have often seen, and still often see (for I must let out the secret that I am a physician,) cases in which the sufferings of illness are much increased, and I have every reason to believe the chances of recovery much diminished, by a want of persevering attention to the sick; but an example occurred to me when I was a young man, which at the time when it happened affected me much, and has left on my mind an indelible impression. Whilst I was a student at the university of —, and during one of the long vacations which I was spending at — on the coast of —, an English frigate cap-

tured a French frigate, brought her into the roads, and the sick and wounded were sent on shore to a temporary hospital which was fitted up for the purpose. As the ordinary medical attendants were insufficient to attend upon the sufferers, others were invited to assist them, and I was entrusted with the care of two small wards, one of them full of Frenchmen. They were an orderly and peaceable set of men, received the attentions which I paid them with thankfulness, and when those who were cured were sent from the hospital to the prison, they used to come to me before departing, in a cluster, with a spokesman at their head, who, with an air of courtesy which is seldom seen among English sailors, expressed the general gratitude of the whole party for the humanity with which they had been attended. Among these poor fellows there was one who excited unusual interest in me—his name was Pierre * * * * he was a tall slender young man, about two and twenty years of age, with a sallow countenance, a full dark eye, and hair of the deepest black. You would have been certain that he was a foreigner, and have guessed that he was an Italian—he had received a severe wound in his right leg, which had affected the knee with pain and swelling. The principal surgeons at the hospital deliberated whether or no to remove the limb; a humane desire to save it if possible, led them to postpone the operation for several weeks, but the time at length arrived when it was obviously necessary to sacrifice the limb, in order to save his life, and the operation was performed above the knee. Pierre went through it with admirable firmness—I had the command of the tourniquet. After the removal of the limb the blood vessels were secured with ligatures—the wound was closed and bandaged, a cotton night-cap was drawn over the stump, and poor Pierre was lifted from the operation-table, and gently placed in a warm, clean, comfortable bed. For several weeks his chief suffering had been pain in the knee. In the

evening after the operation I went to see him, and as I entered the ward, I heard him complaining aloud of pain in the knee. I told him it was impossible that he could have pain in that knee, as it had been cut off in the morning, but this did not satisfy him; he still called out loudly about pain in his knee. I lifted up the bed-clothes, and showed him that his knee was gone; he looked at it for a moment, and then raising his eyes, earnestly said, 'Then it is the *ghost* of my knee.' The truth is, that he really felt pain; but by an error which surgeons often witness, and metaphysicians have often described, referred it to a part which was gone.

"The stump healed slowly; at length it did heal, but now we had a new difficulty to encounter. From long lying in bed upon his back, the skin on the loins began to come off, first in little places, which, gradually extending, joined, and formed a large wound; and this began to slough, as surgeons call it, that is, portions of the flesh died and fell away. What was to be done? As long as he continued to lie on his back, the pressure on the flesh, which was able to cause this ulceration, would, of course, be able to prevent its healing. No good was to be hoped for unless we could lift him off his back. I need not relate the difficulties which I encountered in this task, the various contrivances which I employed, and the pains and time which I spent in effecting my object; but I did effect it. I so adjusted his bed and pillows, that one day he lay on one side, another day on the other, and never on his back. The consequence was, that the ulceration and sloughing stopped; the wound began to look healthy, filled up with new flesh, then skinned over; and at the same time Pierre was recovering his health and looks; he slept well, enjoyed his food, gained flesh, and began to look another man. The wound was nearly healed, when, just at this critical period, the time arrived for my return to the University; and I took leave of poor Pierre and my other patients.

I did not, however, go straight to the university, but went first to spend ten days or a fortnight with my relations. As I write this I feel a pang of self-reproach. On my way to the university I had to go back through the town, and, of course, visited the hospital to see how my patients were going on. That visit was a painful one. I shall never forget it. During my absence Pierre had fallen under the care of a young man, an assistant surgeon, who, although good tempered, and not deficient in sense or in knowledge of his profession, was incorrigibly indolent and inattentive. Pierre was allowed to roll on his back again; the young skin and flesh soon ulcerated and sloughed; a hectic fever followed; he lost his appetite, and wasted to a skeleton. He was in this state when I returned and visited the hospital. As I opened the door of the ward in which Pierre lay, it so happened that his eyes, always large and prominent, but now larger and more prominent from the emaciated appearance of his face, were turned towards the door, and he instantly caught sight of me. Poor fellow! I think I now see him first lay his left cheek on his pillow, then turn his face toward me again, clasp his hands, burst into tears, and exclaim that he should now die happy. He had been for some days aware of his approaching dissolution, had been writing verses on me in French, and repeatedly expressed a hope that he should live till I returned, that he might see me once more and take leave of me for ever. He had his wish and that was all. He died that night.

“Let the Church, or if not, let that class of Christians in whom, above all others, religion is not a mere Sunday ceremony, but the daily and hourly principle of their thoughts and actions, and of whom I have only to complain for a little error in doctrine, and more than a little cant at least in language, which latter peculiarity is perpetually preventing the success of their religious appeals, at least to educated minds,

and which is as great an obstacle to the first steps in religion as technical jargon to the first steps in science—let all serious Christians, I say, join, and found an order of women like the Sisters of Charity in Catholic countries; let them be selected for good plain sense, kindness of disposition, indefatigable industry, and deep piety; let them receive not a technical and scientific, but a practical medical education; for this purpose, let them be placed both as nurses and pupils in the hospitals of Edinburgh or London, or in the county hospitals; let their attention be pointed by the attending physician to the particular symptoms by which he distinguishes the disease; let them be made as familiar with the best remedies, which are always few, as they are with barley-water, gruel, and beef-tea. Let them learn the rules by which these remedies are to be employed; let them be examined frequently on these subjects, in order to see that they carry these rules clearly in their heads; let books be framed for them, containing the essential rules of practice, briefly, clearly, and untechnically written; let such women, thus educated, be distributed among the country parishes of the kingdom, and be maintained by the parish allowance, which now goes to the parish surgeon; who should be resorted to only in difficult cases; let them be examined every half year by competent physicians about the state of their medical knowledge; let this be done, and I fearlessly predict that my friend, and all those who are similarly situated, and zealous with himself, will no longer complain that their sick flock suffered from medical neglect.

“It may be objected, that women with such an education would form a bad substitute for a scientific medical attendant. Be it remembered, however, that the choice is not between such women and a profound and perfect physician or surgeon, (if there is such a person,) but between such women and the ordinary run of country apothecaries; the latter labouring

under the additional disadvantage of wanting time for the application of what skill they have."

Medical Attendance on the Country Poor.

"SIR,

"Those who live much in the country, at a distance from towns and cities, especially parish priests, charitable ladies, and that hard working and useful class of medical men, who, in a worldly point of view, may be said to have the misfortune to have settled in these thinly-peopled districts, well know the deplorable medical attendance which the poor receive in sickness. Those who live in cities, or large towns, are generally near some hospital, infirmary, or dispensary, where they find as good medical attendance for nothing as those above them in society can procure for money—less ceremoniously administered, it is true, but in all essential respects as good. But what is the condition of the poor man, whose self, or whose family, is overtaken by sickness in the country? He is at a distance from the surgeon of the neighbouring town—he is too poor to pay for advice from such a distance—he applies to the parish, and receives from the overseers an order for the attendance of the parish surgeon. What this attendance is may be learnt, partly from the way in which it is purchased, and partly from the experience of those who have witnessed it. Now, on these topics, the best sources of information are country clergymen and country surgeons, and to such persons I turn, with this remark, that I know enough from my own experience to bear out their statements.

"In most instances the medical attendance on a parish is farmed, that is, it is given to the surgeon who will do it on the lowest terms, with little or no regard to his skill, attention, or place of residence, which throw a probable light on

the way in which he will fulfil his task. The terms of the contract are incredibly low—so low as not to approach remuneration for his skill, time, trouble, and drugs, and consequently to afford a constant temptation to a neglect of his duty. The contract is commonly at the rate of from thirty to fifty shillings a hundred for the whole population of the parish, that is, at the rate of sixpence a head for the year. ‘Many country surgeons contract with three, four, or even five parishes. Parishes containing five or six hundred paupers have been taken for five or six pounds; twenty or thirty parishes have been farmed by one practitioner, and even a large parish actually farmed for one guinea per annum.’* Those who have seen how this plan works, assert, in the strongest terms, that the result, as might have been expected, is disgraceful to the parish surgeon, and injurious to the poor; and they relate, how sickness is often prolonged, and life lost from neglect. They agree, however, in stating, that notwithstanding this vile plan, the most respectable surgeons of a neighbourhood undertake the task far oftener than might have been expected; but the secret is this—if they did not, some other person would, and this might lead to the introduction of a new rival into the neighbourhood; besides, attendance on the poor leads to attendance on the middling and higher classes in the neighbourhood, and the surgeon seldom goes on a parish journey but he picks up more than he expected. Let us follow him on one of his distant visits, and we shall soon understand the motive which induces him to accept these degrading terms. He receives an order from the overseer to visit a parish patient. The time is winter—the weather bad—the roads almost impassible, and the patient several miles off—nevertheless our rural Esculapius mounts his nag, envelops his throat in a handkerchief, buttons his fear-nought

* See Report of a Committee for conducting an Inquiry into the State of the Sick Poor. Warwick, September, 1827.

close about his chin, and, wrapping its skirts about his knees, off he sets through sleet and snow, along road and lane, over hill and common. Here he dismounts to open a gate—there his horse is knee-deep—crossing the common, he is nearly thrown in passing some snow-covered hole ; but at length he arrives at the place of his destination, and, hanging the bridle on the rails, enters the brick-paved cottage of his pauper patient. I will not stop to inquire how he performs his task—I know enough of the industry, the professional zeal, and the benevolent disposition of this meritorious class of my brethren, to feel assured that it is often performed far better than might have been expected. But for such a journey and back again, sixpence a-head for the whole parish, and the whole year, is hard work and poor pay : but a country surgeon is too important a person to pass incog. through the most solitary hamlet. The labouring man doffs his hat as he passes, the female cottager drops him a curtesy, and the little urchins stop their play to smile at ‘the Doctor.’ It is soon known far and wide that this important personage is within reach ; the farmer’s wife engages him to attend her in her confinement ; the parson has a hoarse cough ; the publican is plethoric ; the wheelwright has cut his leg ; and the neighbouring squire is laid up with the gout. He is consulted about them all, and returns home heavy laden with orders for pills, draughts, blisters, plasters, and fomentations.

“Nevertheless he is constantly meeting with temptations to neglect his parish duties, and is constantly neglecting them. Whenever he has messages from rich patients in one, and pauper patients in an opposite direction, and this is continually occurring, it cannot happen otherwise than that the latter are neglected. And here I shall let ‘the Country Clergyman’* speak for me, one of the best parish priests in

* A Letter to the Bishop of London on a Plan for administering Medical Advice to the Sick Poor. 1826.

the land, and one who is minutely acquainted with the scenes he depicts. The following picture is not overcharged:—
'It may be as well if we look to the situation of a poor labouring or manufacturing man, during the sickness of himself or his family, according to the present state of things. He is taken ill at his labour with the symptoms of incipient fever; his nerveless limbs refuse the excitement to work, which, nevertheless, he continues for several days. Overpowered at length, he applies to the overseer, who gives him a note to the parish doctor; this he takes to the doctor's residence at the next town, five, six, seven, or possibly eight miles off. Here, if he is fortunate enough to meet with the doctor himself, he has some medicines given him, and he is told to go home and go to bed, and come back the next day. By the time the man arrives at his cottage, however, he is in no condition to obey the latter order if it should have been given, but instinctively complies with the former, whether given or not. He lies in bed day after day till the doctor's assistant calls; the result of the visit is, that the patient is desired to send to the doctor's for more medicine; for this the wife must leave her husband's bed-side, if she has no child old enough to go for her, or can get no neighbour to undertake the journey. If the man's constitution be strong enough to carry him through his illness, nature does her work, and in spite of every thing he recovers; but if his constitution be unable to struggle with the disease, he grows worse. Somebody tells the clergyman, who finds the poor man in danger, and speaks to the doctor or the overseer, and then more attention is paid—the doctor comes himself, but too late: and the man dies, or at best is brought with difficulty, through a long course of debility, to a tardy and imperfect recovery.'

"Such is the account given by a country clergyman who is minutely acquainted with what is going on in the cottages of the poor, and well knows their sufferings and wants in sick-

ness. There may be in it an unreasonable though natural disposition to under-rate the skill of the surgeon's assistant ; but this is certain, that the visits on the sick pauper are continually delayed, are paid as seldom as possible, and that, in numerous instances, especially in febrile and inflammatory diseases, he has not the fair chance of benefit which our art (feeble, it is true, in many cases, but in many, also, all-powerful) is able to afford.

“To supply the poor with medical attendance more adequate to their wants ; to relieve more speedily their sufferings ; shorten their illnesses, and, in some instances, save their lives, two plans have been proposed which I shall proceed to describe.

“In the year 1823, some opulent and benevolent persons held a meeting at Southam, a small country town of Warwickshire, near Stratford-upon-Avon, when Mr. Smith, a surgeon of the town, proposed the establishment of a Dispensary for the sick poor of that neighbourhood. The funds for the support of this dispensary were to be drawn from three sources—parochial contributions ; the subscriptions of opulent persons, and, lastly, voluntary subscriptions from the poor themselves. There would be two classes of patients, those who would have a claim on the dispensary from the subscriptions of their parish, and those whose claim would depend on their own subscriptions. The latter were to have the encouraging appellation of ‘Independent poor ;’ their annual subscription was to be 3*s.* 6*d.* for an adult, and 2*s.* for a child, and this would give them a right to medical attendance whenever they required it. The medical attendants on this dispensary were to be all the respectable surgeons of the neighbourhood, who were to take care of the sick poor of Southam and the surrounding country within six miles ; and for this the income of the dispensary, after paying its expenses, was to be divided among the surgeons, according to the number

of miles travelled and visits made. Attendance was to be given at the dispensary one hour every day, excepting Sunday, when those patients who were able to go, received advice: those who were too ill to go out, were to be visited at their own houses. As they were no longer dependent on one surgeon, they were not likely to be neglected, for it was not probable that all would be busy, or out of the way at the same time.

“The Southam Dispensary has now been in operation four years, and the result appears to be highly satisfactory to the members. It has been wholly maintained by parish subscriptions for the pauper patients, and by the voluntary subscriptions of the independent poor, without any assistance hitherto from opulent persons. At a vestry meeting at Southam, in March of this year, it was resolved that, of two hundred persons among the poor subscribers to the Southam Dispensary, one half would have been on the parish, if it had not been for this institution, and they strongly recommend the formation of similar dispensaries all over the kingdom.

“Although the Southam Dispensary is said to have succeeded, much of its success is attributed to the personal exertions, and even pecuniary sacrifices of the founder, which cannot of course be calculated on in future. It is not probable that its success will be permanent and considerable, unless its funds are enriched by the subscriptions of the opulent. In an explanatory note by Mr. Smith, it is stated that the amount of the subscriptions for half a year was £61 9s. 3d., from which, after paying the expenses of the charity, only £18 14s. 11d. remained to be divided among the medical men.

“The other plan proposed for supplying the sick poor in the country with medical attendance more adequate to their wants, is to form an order of women similar to the Beguines of Flanders, and the Sœurs de la Charité of France; to in-

struct them in medicine, as far as it can be done as a practical art ; and to station them in the country parishes of England. What I know about these singular and admirable orders of women, and how they might be adopted, and adapted to the station for which they are proposed, I will relate in a subsequent letter.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

A COUNTRY CLERGYMAN."



" I concluded my former letter by remarking that another plan for supplying the sick poor in the country with better medical attendance than what they now receive, was to form an order of women similar to the Beguines of Flanders, and the Sœurs de la Charité of France ; to give them such practical instructions in medicine as would enable them to detect and relieve the common forms of disease, and to station them in the country parishes of England. This plan was first proposed two years ago by an anonymous writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, in a paper entitled ' Protestant Sisters of Charity.' The proposal was soon followed by a pamphlet under the same title, addressed to the Bishop of London, and signed ' A Country Clergyman,' in which the proposal of the anonymous writer was adopted and enforced. Some efforts were made to induce the established church to put the plan to the test of experiment, but without success.

" A few summers ago I passed through Flanders on my way to Germany, and at the hospital at Bruges saw some of the Beguines, and heard the physician, with whom I was intimate, speak in strong terms of their services ; he said ' there are no such nurses.' I saw them in the wards attending on the sick, and in the chapel of the hospital on their knees,

washing the floor. They were obviously a superior class of women, and the contrast was striking between these menial offices, and the respectability of their dress and appearance ; but the Beguinage of Ghent is one of their principal establishments, and spending a Sunday there, I went in the evening to vespers. It was twilight when I entered the chapel. It was dimly lighted by two or three tall tapers before the altar, and a few candles at the remotest end of the building in the orchestra, but the body of the chapel was in deep gloom, filled from end to end with several hundred of these nuns seated in rows, in their dark dresses and white cowls, silent and motionless, excepting now and then when one of them started up, and stretching out her arms in the attitude of the crucifixion, stood in that posture many minutes—then sank and disappeared among the crowd. The gloom of the chapel—the long lines of these unearthly looking figures, like so many corpses propped up in their grave-clothes—the dead silence of the building, once only interrupted by a few voices in the distant orchestra chanting vespers—was one of the most striking sights I ever beheld. To some readers, the occasional attitude of the nuns may seem an absurd expression of fanaticism, but they are any thing but fanatics. Whoever is accustomed to the manners of the continental nations, knows that they employ grimace in every thing. I much doubt whether, apart from the internal emotion of piety, the external expression of it is graceful in any one, save only in a little child in his night-shirt, on his knees saying his evening prayer.

“The Beguinage, or residence of the Beguines at Ghent, is a little town of itself, adjoining the city, and enclosed from it. The transition from the crowded streets of Ghent, to the silence and solitude of the Beguinage is very striking. The houses in which the Beguines reside are contiguous, each having its small garden, and on the door the name, not of the

resident, but of the protecting saint of the house; these houses are ranged into streets. There is also the large church, which we visited, and a burial ground, in which there are no monuments. There are upwards of six hundred of these nuns in the Beguinage of Ghent, and about six thousand in Brabant and Flanders. They receive sick persons into the Beguinage, and not only nurse but support them until they are recovered; they also go out to nurse the sick. They are bound by no vow excepting to be chaste and obedient while they remain in the order; they have the power of quitting it and returning again into the world whenever they please, but this it is said they seldom or never do. They are most of them women unmarried, or widows past the middle of life. In 1244, a synod at Fritzlau decided that no Beguine should be younger than forty years of age. They generally dine together in the refectory; their apartments are barely yet comfortably furnished, and, like all the habitations of Flanders, remarkably clean. About their origin and name little is known by the Beguines themselves, or is to be found in books. For the following particulars I am chiefly indebted to the *Histoire des Ordres Monastiques*, (tom. 8.) Some attribute both their origin and name to St. Begghe, who lived in the seventh century; others to Lambert le Begue, who lived about the end of the twelfth century. This latter saint is said to have founded two communities of them at Liege, one for women, in 1173, the other for men, in 1177. After his death they multiplied fast, and were introduced by Saint Louis to Paris, and other French cities. The plan flourished in France, and was adopted under other forms and names. In 1443, Nicholas Rollin, Chancellor to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, founded a hospital at Beaune, and brought six Beguines from Malines to attend upon it, and the hospital became so famed for the care of its patients, that the opulent people of the neighbourhood when sick were often removed to it, preferring

its attendance to what they received at home. In one part of the hospital there was a large square court, bordered with galleries leading to apartments suitable to such patients; when they quitted the hospital the donations which they left were added to its funds.

“The *Sœurs de la Charité* of France are another order of religious nurses, but different from the *Beguines* in being bound by monastic vows. They originated in a charity sermon, perhaps the most useful and extensive in its influence that ever was preached. Vincent de Paul, a celebrated missionary, preaching at Chatillon, in 1617, recommended a poor sick family of the neighbourhood to the care of his congregation. At the conclusion of the sermon a number of persons visited the sick family with bread, wine, meat, and other comforts. This led to the formation of a committee of charitable women, under the direction of Vincent de Paul, who went about relieving the sick poor of the neighbourhood, and met every month to give an account of their proceedings to their superior. Such was the origin of the celebrated order of the *Sœurs de la Charité*. Wherever this missionary went he attempted to form similar establishments. From the country they spread to cities, and first to Paris, where, in 1629, they were established in the parish of St. Saviour.

“About 1625, a female devotee, named Le Gras, joined the order of the *Sœurs de la Charité*. She was married young to M. le Gras, one of whose family had founded a hospital at Puy, but becoming a widow in 1625, in the 34th year of her age, she made a vow of celibacy, and dedicated the rest of her life to the service of the poor. In her, Vincent de Paul found a great accession. Under his direction she took many journies, visiting and inspecting the establishments which he had founded. She was commonly accompanied by a few pious ladies. Many women of quality enrolled themselves in the order, but the superiors were assisted by inferior ser-

vants. The Hôtel Dieu was the first hospital in Paris where they exercised their vocations. This they visited every day, supplying the patients with comforts above what the hospital afforded, and administering, besides, religious consolation. By degrees they spread into all the provinces of France, and at length the Queen of Poland requested Mademoiselle le Gras, for though a widow that was her title, to send her a supply of Sœurs de la Charité, who were thus established in Varsovia, in 1652. At length, after a long life spent in the service of charity and religion, Mademoiselle le Gras died on the 15th of March, 1660, nearly 70 years of age, and for a day and a half her body lay exposed to the gaze of the pious.

“The Country Clergyman, who spent several years in various parts of France, gives an account of the present state of the order, of which, together with what I have gathered from other sources, is in substance as follows:—It consists of women of all ranks, many of them of the higher orders. After a year’s noviciate in the convent, they take a vow, which binds them to the order for the rest of their lives. They have two objects—to attend the sick, and to educate the poor; they are spread all over France, are the superior nurses at the hospitals, and are to be found in every town, and often even in villages. Go into the Paris hospitals at almost any hour of the day, and you will see one of these respectable looking women in her black gown and white hood, passing slowly from bed to bed, and stopping to inquire of some poor wretch what little comfort he is fancying will alleviate his sufferings. If a parochial curé wants assistance in the care of his flock, he applies to the order of les Sœurs de la Charité. Two of them (for they generally go in couples) set out on their charitable mission—wherever they travel their dress protects them. ‘Even more enlightened persons than the common peasantry hail it as a happy omen when on a

journey a *Sœur de la Charité* happens to travel with them, and even instances are recorded in which their presence has saved travellers from the attacks of robbers.' During the Revolution they were rarely molested. They were the only religious order permitted openly to wear their dress and pursue their vocation. Government gives a hundred francs a year to each sister, besides her travelling expenses; and if the parish where they go cannot maintain them, they are supported out of the funds of the order. In old age they retire to their convent, and spend the rest of their lives in educating the noviciates. Thus, like the vestal virgins of old, the first part of their life is spent in learning their duties, the second in practising them, and the last in teaching them.

"If an attempt should be made to introduce Sisters of Charity into England, I would advise the experiment to be made at first on a small scale. They should be not mere nurses, and religious instructors, but a set of religious female physicians. I would select two or three women—not superannuated servants in search of a quiet livelihood, who are thinking of nothing but how to make money with the least trouble, and who would apply, or be recommended in crowds for such a purpose—but women originally and habitually of a higher order, young enough to learn, yet old enough to be sick of worldly vanities; in short, with strong sense, a good education, and something of the devotee, (there are many such.) I would place them in some hospital under an experienced, clear-headed, practical physician, who should explain to them in untechnical language, as they went from bed to bed, the signs by which he is guided in the choice of his remedies: why, in one case, the prominent symptom of which is a cough, he gives opium, and in another, in which the prominent symptom is still a cough, he draws blood: why, in one case, in which the prominent symptom is pain, he employs fomentations and opiates, and in another, in which the promi-

nent symptom is still pain, he draws blood, gives purgatives, and low diet. I would sharpen their attention, and assist their memories by frequent examinations into their knowledge; always remembering that it is not safely deposited in the mind until the student can state it and apply it herself. This system of instruction should continue until my Sisters of Charity have acquired a readiness in detecting all ordinary diseases, in selecting the guiding symptom or symptoms, and in the use of that short list of remedies which even medical men find sufficient in pauper practice. When they are ripe for my purpose, I would (taking a hint from *les Sœurs de la Charité*) station two of them, of suitable dispositions, in a cottage placed in the centre of some country district. I would have them maintained partly from the parish funds, partly by the voluntary subscriptions of the opulent people of the neighbourhood, and partly by those of the charitable and religious world. Their kindness and care would soon ensure the goodwill of the poor. A few cures would be followed by medical reputation, and the cottagers of the district would soon have reason to bless the hour when these useful women settled in their neighbourhood.

“Objections, of course, will be made to this plan. The Country Clergyman alludes to a strange one—that, although it has succeeded in the hands of Catholics, it will not in those of Protestants, because Catholicism, it is said, is a religion of works. If Protestantism is not, the sooner we are Catholics the better; but this is a strange objection to make to the religion of Christ, who tells us, ‘inasmuch as ye have done it (visited the sick, &c.) unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’ Another is, that it is not adapted to the manners and habits of England. The best answer to this, is the fact that it has already been adopted by the Irish Catholics, and that those of England are supporting and joining it. An order of Sisters of Charity was founded

in Ireland in 1815; there are three houses, two in Dublin, and one in Cork; they nurse the sick, receive the poor into an asylum, console the dying, and educate the young. A female friend of mine belongs to the order; she says it is difficult to conceive the appalling scenes of misery which they witness, and describes herself as supremely happy in her duties. My jocose readers will remind me of Corporal Trim's adventure with the Beguine. I am well aware of Burton's maxim, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, that the chief cause of love is juxtaposition, but it would be easy to show, by facts, that this is as great an objection to the employment of young men as of middle-aged devotees.

“Many will think that it is impossible to impart a useful knowledge of medicine to women who are ignorant of anatomy, physiology, and pathology. A profound knowledge, of course, could not, but a very useful degree of it might: a degree which, combined with kindness and assiduity, would be far superior to that which the country poor receive at present. I have known matrons and sisters of hospitals with more practical tact in the detection and treatment of disease, than half of the young surgeons by whom the country poor are commonly attended. One of the best practitioners—one who afforded more relief, and effected more cures than almost any man I have ever known, troubled his head very little about anatomy, physiology, and pathology; the favourite object of his study through life were the powers of remedies. Wherever a patient recovered from a disease which baffled others, he never rested till he had made out what occasioned the recovery, and he never forgot it. In this way, during a long life of great activity, he treasured up prodigious resources in the treatment of disease, and when he died left a void in the provincial neighbourhood in which he had lived, which has never been filled.

“There are only two classes of people whom I have any

hope of influencing in favour of this plan—one are the Church Methodists, the other the Society of Friends. Surely a little of that zeal and money which are flowing so plentifully into Bible and Missionary Societies might be spared for so desirable and promising an experiment as this. Could not Mrs. Fry divert a little of her zeal from the female convicts in Newgate to the sick poor in the country? or could not her friend, Mrs. Opie, the daughter of a physician, and, if her writings are to be trusted, a tender-hearted woman, become the Mademoiselle le Gras to an order of female religious physicians, by which they might bless their country and immortalize their names?

“The object of my two letters has been to make known to the benevolent public the wants of the sick poor in the country, and the two plans which have been recommended for their relief. I must now leave my statement to its fate, earnestly wishing that it may be as successful as Vincent de Paul’s charity sermon.

I am, Sir,

A COUNTRY SURGEON”

London Medical Gazette, vol. i.

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